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THE

WORKS

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

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OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY,

WITH

HIS LIFE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE

LIFE

OF THE AUTHOR.

To write the life of a man, such as Shelley was, must necessarily prove a task of no ordinary difficulty. Eccentric in his disposition, and differing from the far greater proportion of mankind in his theological views,—if such indeed we may term them, he has left behind him a name tainted, on the one hand, for the irreligious doctrines that he has promulgated, and on the other immortalized for the originality and genius so conspicuous in every line of his glowing verse. Deeply impressed with the difficulties to be encountered, we will, however, grapple with them fearlessly, animadverting with severity where severity may appear to be deserved, and marking in terms of praise our admiration of that extraordinary genius which he displayed in his brief but most splendid career of literary fame. Having thus stated our views and intentions, we will now proceed fairly with our subject, and, by an impartial statement of facts, put the reader in possession of such details relative to Shel-

ley, that each one may form his own estimate of the genius and character of one of the most extraordinary men of modern times.

Percy Bysshe Shelley, the eldest son of Sir Timothy Shelley, Bart, was born on the 4th of August, 1792, and brought up, till seven or eight years of age, in the retirement of Field Place, his father's seat, near Warnham, in the county of Sussex. From hence he was sent to a school at Brentford, where he passed several years preparatory to being entered at Eaton. This place was a perfect purgatory to Shelley, who had to endure every species of insult and torment from those among whom he was thus thrown, and doubtless much of his hatred of oppression may be attributed to what he saw and suffered at this school.

In the year 1805, at the age of thirteen, he was sent to Eaton, where he exhibited a character of great eccentricity, mixing in none of the amusements natural to his age, and being also of a melancholy and reserved disposition. This was a new and better world to him, but Shelley's was a spirit that ill brooked restraint, so that he did not distinguish himself much here, where, as at other public schools, superior merit is only assigned to those who have the knack of making Latin verses—a task he abhorred. At Eaton he pregressed rapidly in his studies, and proved himself no indifferent scholar, by having translated several books of Pliny's Natural History. Much of the last year before he went to the University was devoted to the

German language, which he studied with his usual ardour of pursuit, and to this particular course of reading we may attribute much of his love of the romantic and the marvellous.* At a very early age our poet began to think deeply upon every subject, and it is therefore not surprising that, with his active and inquiring mind, he should at this youthful period involve himself in errors from which he could never afterwards extricate himself. Thus was he almost unconsciously led into a train of error which in after-life proved the prolific source to which all his miseries owed their origin.

"Queen Mab," which has been called his "glory as a poet and his shame as a man," was composed at the age of eighteen, and by Lord Byron considered as a poem of great power and imagination. Shelley never intended this poem for publication, and exceedingly regretted that a reprint of a private copy should have been made by a bookseller, as he considered the crudeness and injudiciousness of some of the sentiments contained in it might rather retard than assist the melioration of mankind.

The main object of "Queen Mab" is to prove that evil was not a primitive ingredient in the composition of man, and that, therefore, he having, by a departure from the track originally marked out for him by nature, incurred all the dangers and difficulties which

* Medwin's Life of Shelley, 1832.

beset every other but the one true road to happiness, can, by the same free-will which led him into error, *still* return to that blessed state in which the Maker of all that is good first created him. For the poet seems to hold it incompatible with the vigilance of him who delights in the gentle name of the "Good Shepherd," that he can permit his flock, or any part of it, to wander so far from his heavenly fold as to lose all power of returning when tired and ashamed of the "error of their ways." This is incontestibly the *design*, but, so ill chosen are the means for accomplishing it, that they crush what they were to have cherished. The prepossessions imbibed in infancy are so grossly insulted,—not reasoned with, but knocked down, trampled on, and passed over,—the titles of the Divine Author of existence, though such a Being is virtually acknowledged, are so indecently sported with, and in such blasphemous paradoxes, coupled with all that is frightful and detestable, that it may safely be asserted no single individual, retaining one spark of religious feeling, can ever have had that spark extinguished by Shelley's Faery Queen. Her diction is at all times, when theology is not, and it *is* not *long* her exclusive topic, highly wrought and magnificent in the extreme, and the progress of her magic car to the realms where Ianthe, the sleeping heroine, is to be tutored in ignorance, and a prospective view of the Millenium, are depicted in the most gorgeous and masterly style. The former incident is obviously the foundation of one of the finest

scenes in "Cain," and the latter is an imaginative description, perhaps not excelled in any poem whatsoever.—But to return from this digression.

At an early age Shelley was removed from Eton, and sent to University College, Oxford, where he pursued his studies with great ardour, applying himself, however, chiefly to Logic, which his penetrating and inquisitive mind applied to theological subjects in the most uncompromising manner, until, fearless of all consequences, he even proceeded so far as to circulate his opinions in a pamphlet which he sent round among the dignitaries of the University. The consequence of this imprudence was a fatal one to Shelley; he was ordered to appear before the heads of the college to which he belonged, and, refusing to retract the opinions he had thus published to the world, he was immediately expelled the University.

In alluding to this unhappy circumstance, Captain Medwin, in his Memoir of our poet, says, "I remember, as if it occured yesterday, his knocking at my door in the Temple at four o'clock in the morning after his expulsion. I think I hear his cracked voice, with its well-known pipe: "Medwin, let me in;—I am expelled; (here followed a loud half-hysteric laugh)—I am expelled for atheism." Though somewhat shocked, I was not much surprised at the news, having been led from the tenor of his letters to anticipate some such an end to his collegiate career. During the last term too, he had published a strange half-mad volume of poems

entitled the "Posthumous works of my aunt Margaret Nicholson," in which were some panegyrical stanzas to the memory of Charlotte Corday; the poetry was well *worthy* of the subject.

Family dissatisfaction was the natural result of this unfortunate manifestation of the bent of his disposition, and, in addition to the disgrace he was then compelled to endure, he had to sustain the wrath of his father, and all those family connections which he most loved. Thus situated, Shelley remained in London till his father's anger had in some degree evaporated. At that time his mind was wholly devoted to metaphysics, and so completely absorbed was he in this study, that, having one evening wandered into Leicester Square, he unconsciously threw himself on the pavement near the centre railings, where he was discovered at an early hour on the following morning, having, unknown to himself, passed the greater part of the night *sub dio*.

At the age of eighteen, whilst yet a mere boy in point of years and experience, he married a young lady named Harriet Westbrook, whose age was nearly that of his own; this union, however, brought with it nothing but care and disappointment, which was terminated by a mutual consent to separate after the birth of two children.* By this marriage the last

* Jane, only daughter, living at this time, (1834,) æt. about 20; Charles Bysshe, eldest son, born in London; died August, 1826, aged about 11; buried at Warnham.

remaining ties between him and his family were entirely broken; and, disgusted at the heartlessness of those who ought to have been his best friends in affliction, he resolved to quit England, and to seek forgetfulness of the past in foreign travel. His health, always delicate, was impaired by the misery he had undergone, together with the quantity of opium he had taken in the hours of his inquietude.

On the 28th of July, 1814, he commenced a continental tour; crossed the Channel in an open boat, and had a very narrow escape from being upset in a sudden squall. Passing a few days in Paris he received a small remittance, with which slender provision he determined to walk through France. At the Marché des Herbes he bought an ass, and thus started for Charenton, where, finding the animal too weak to carry his portmanteau, he made the purchase of a mule and proceeded to Troyes, where, having sprained his ancle, the remainder of his journey to Neuchatel was performed *par voiture*. Lucerne was the next canton visited, coasting its romantic lake up to Brunen, where he hired a chateau for a week; but, finding he had only £28 left, and no chance of further remittances till December, he resolved to return home by the Reuss and the Rhine. On the 31st of August he landed in England from Rotterdam, having travelled 800 miles at an expense of less than thirty pounds.

The succeeding eighteen months after his return were passed in London, where he had to endure all

the horror of poverty, but, having at length in some degree retrieved his fortune, he, in May, 1816, paid a second visit to the continent, and reached Sécheron, near Geneva, on the 17th of that month.—Here he formed a friendship with Lord Byron, who was at that time residing in the hotel. At their first interview they were so mutally pleased with each other, that it ended in Shelley's deciding to take a villa immediately at the foot of that already taken by Lord Byron,—the Campagne Diodati. Here then commenced that friendship between Shelley and Byron which tended so much to soothe their after-regrets for their lost native land.

At the end of July, Shelley went to Chamouni, where, at the foot of Mount Blanc, were composed his sublime lines on the source of the Arveiron, and it was to a vivid remembrance of the romantic excursions he was wont at this period to take, that we owe the scenes so glowingly depicted in the "Revolt of Islam," a poem in twelve cantos, which he tells us in his preface occupied little more than six months in the composition.

After an absence of more than a year, Shelley once more returned to England, and was residing at Bath, when, in November, 1817, the startling news reached him that his wife had destroyed herself in a moment of temporary derangement. This was a heavy blow to him, as his compunction, which produced a brief period of insanity, proves; yet even here his misery was not complete, for, within a short time afterwards by a

decree of the Court of Chancery, he was deprived of his children, who were torn from him and consigned to the care of strangers, on the ground of a printed copy of "Queen Mab," which in his preface to "Alastor" he disclaimed any intention of publishing.

Some time after the death of this unfortunate lady, Shelley married Mary Woolstoncroft Godwin,* daughter of the Novelist of that name, with whom he resided in seclusion at Great Marlow in Buckinghamshire. Here he is said to have "passed his days like a hermit." He rose early in the morning, walked and read before breakfast, took that meal sparingly, wrote and studied the greater part of the morning, walked and read again, dined on vegetables, (for he took neither meat nor wine,) conversed with his friends, to whom his house was ever open; again walked out, and usually finished with reading to his wife till ten o'clock, when he went to bed. This was his daily existence. His book was generally Plato or Homer, or one of the Greek tragedians, or the Bible—in which last he took a great, though peculiar and often admiring, interest.

Captain Medwin, who knew Shelley from a child, tells us that "at Marlow he led a quiet, retired, domestic, life, and has left behind him a character for benevolence and charity that still endears him to the inhabitants. His charity, though so liberal, was not

* By this marriage Shelley had issue two children :—William, who died in infancy in Italy, and was there buried; and Percy Florence, only surviving son, born at Florence, Nov. 12, 1819.

weak. He inquired personally into the circumstances of the petitioners, visited the sick in their beds, (for he had gone the round of the hospitals, on purpose to be able to practice on occasion,) and kept a regular list of industrious poor, whom he assisted with small sums to make up their accounts.

It was, however, poor Shelley's misfortune to leave Marlow with considerable claims from his creditors. Shelley's dependencies were any thing but tangible. Notwithstanding he was heir to several thousand pounds per annum, his unbounded charity left him at an early age in extreme destitution. He even sold some reversionary property in fee, to his father, for an annuity of £1000, which provision enabled him to reside at Marlow. Whilst here, Shelley published "a proposal for putting Reform to the vote throughout England," for which purpose, as an earnest of his sincerity, he offered to contribute a hundred pounds, which sum, though owing to his liberal habits, he could very ill spare at the time, he would have done his best to supply by economizing.

Captain Medwin mentions a pamphlet written while here, on the occasion of the Princess Charlotte's death, but the title was only a masque for politics, for, under the lament of the princess, he typified Liberty, and rang her knell.

The cottage at Marlow, situated in the West street, has been but slightly altered since the poet resided there. It is now (1824) he property of Lieut. Colonel Clayton.

Deserted by his own family connexions, and cruelly deprived of his children whom he loved, it may readily be supposed that Shelley's once generous heart was turned against a world in which he saw not the least manifestation of sympathy for the sufferings he was doomed to endure. Love, or pure disinterested friendship, he had hitherto enjoyed in very few instances; mankind seemed to turn from him with disgust; and the whole world appeared to him but as a gloomy waste, whilst his own life was a weary pilgrimage of sorrow and never-ceasing difficulties. That his heart was susceptible of the tenderest feelings of human nature we have sufficient evidence in the ardour and long-continued friendship that existed between himself, Lord Byron, Leigh Hunt, Captain Medwin, and a few others, who, superior to the prejudices of the world in which they lived, extended the hand of kindness to raise from despair the noble heart in which *they*, at least, had penetration sufficient to perceive the most noble qualities. In the society of their kindred souls, and with her who was now the affectionate companion in his joys and sorrows, Shelley's spirits arose from the gloom in which they had been involved, and, if not supremely happy amidst the fierce tempests by which he was assailed, we are at least assured that his mind had found that peace which he had at one time despaired of obtaining.

Early in the spring of the year 1818, Shelly once more quitted England with the design of passing a few

months in foreign travel. He passed rapidly through France and Switzerland, and, crossing the Mount Cenis into Italy, paid a visit to Lord Byron at Venice, where he made a considerable stay. In the autumn he proceeded to Naples, but misfortune followed him even here, and he became, innocently, involved in a tragedy more extraordinary than any to be found in the pages of romance. His departure from Naples was, according to his own account, precipitated by this event, and, quitting the scene of his misery, he hastily proceeded to Rome, where he passed the ensuing winter.

Whilst sojourning in the "Eternal City," Shelley produced his Julian and Maddalo, in which he so well describes himself, Lord Byron, and the once far-famed [illegible]tress of the world. Of Byron, at this time, he says, "He is cheerful, frank, and witty: his more serious conversation a sort of intoxication; men are held by it as a spell!"—of himself, that he "was attached to that philosophical sect that assert the power of man over his own mind, and the immense improvement of which, by the extinction of certain moral superstitions, human society may be susceptible."

Alluding to the brilliant conceptions of his mighty genius whilst at Rome, Captain Medwin says, "Certain it is that artists produce at Rome what they are incapable of conceiving elsewhere, and at which themselves are most sincerely astonished. No wonder then that Shelley should have here surpassed himself, in giv"

ing birth to two of his greatest works, in themselves so different, the "Cenci" and "Prometheus Unbound. He drenched his spirit to intoxication in the deep blue sky of Rome. His favoured haunts were the ruined baths of Caracalla, or the labyrinths of the Coliseum, where he laid the first scene of a tale which promised to rival if not surpass "Corinne." Like Byron in "Childe Harold," or Madame de Staël, he meant to have idealized himself in the principal character."

From Rome Shelley returned to Florence. The Boboli gardens he then graphically describes: "You see below, Florence, a smokeless city, with its domes and spires occupying the vale, and beyond, to the right, the Appenines, whose base extends even to the walls; and whose summits are intersected by ashen-coloured clouds. The green valleys of these mountains, which gently unfold themselves upon the plains, and the interesting hills, covered with vineyards and olive plantations, are occupied by the villas, which are, as it were, another city—a Babylon of palaces and gardens. In the midst of the picture rolls the Arno, now full with the winter rains, through woods, and bounded by the aerial snowy summits of the Appenines on the right; a magnificent buttress of lofty craggy hills, overgrown with wilderness, juts out in many shapes over a lovely valley, and approaches the walls of the city.

"Cascini and other villages occupy the pinnacles and abutments of these hills, over which is seen at in-

tervals, the ethereal mountain-line, hoary with snow and intersected by clouds. The valley below is covered with cypress groves, whose obeliskine forms of intense green pierce the grey shadows of the wintry hill that overhangs them. The cypresses, too, of the garden form a magnificent foreground of accumulated verdure: pyramids of dark green and shining cones, rising out of a mass, between which are cut, like caverns, recesses conducting into walks."

From Florence, Shelley removed to Leghorn and the baths of Lucca, where he passed some few months. From thence he went to Pisa, where he fixed himself with his family for some time, resolving to remain there until circumstances should require his presence once more in England. It was during his stay here that a most extraordinary and cowardly outrage was committed on him, the particulars of which created at the time a more than ordinary sensation. It appears that Shelley had gone to the post-office for some letters that he was in the expectation of receiving, when a stranger, on hearing his name, said, "What! are you that —— atheist, Shelley?" and, having uttered these words, being a tall powerful man, the villain struck him a blow which felled him to the ground in a state of insensibility. On recovering himself, Shelley found that the ruffian had disappeared. Enfuriated with the cowardly outrage, he flew in search of his friend Mr. Tighe, who lost no time in taking measures to obtain satisfaction. For some time Mr. Tighe was unsuccesful in his endeavours to

discover the hotel at which the scoundrel had put up, but at length succeeded in tracing him to the Donzelli. He proved to be an Englishman and an officer in the Portuguese service, but his name is now deservedly forgotten. That he was a coward in the fullest sense of the word is however certain, for he immediately afterwards started for Genoa, whither he was followed by Shelley and Mr. Tighe, but without being able to overtake him, or learn the route he had chosen in order to avoid the just punishment he would have received in retaliation for his ruffianly conduct.

At the latter end of this year Shelley paid a visit to his friend, Lord Byron, at Ravenna. The noble poet was then writing "Cain," and to Shelley it was that he owed his idea of his Hades and the phantasmal worlds. Shortly afterwards Shelley, in concert with his noble friend, proposed to set up a work to be entitled the "Liberal," in the conducting of which Mr. Leigh Hunt was to take a share. For this purpose Mr. Hunt arrived in Italy in June, 1822, and Mr. Shelley, having once more welcomed his friend and family, and seen them comfortably settled at Pisa, set off with Mr. Williams on the night of the 7th of July, to return to his own family at Lerici.

Alluding to this melancholy event, Mrs. Shelley, in the brief memoir prefixed to his Posthumous Poems, thus writes: "I was to have accompanied him, but illness confined me to my room, and thus put the seal on my misfortunes. His vessel bore out of sight with a

favourable wind, and I remained awaiting his return by the breakers of that sea which was about to engulph him. He spent a week at Pisa, employed in kind offices towards his friend, and enjoying with keen delight the renewal of their intercourse. He then embarked with Mr. Williams, the chosen and beloved sharer of his pleasures and of his fate, to return to us. We waited for them in vain; the sea by its restless moaning seemed to desire to inform us of what we could not learn:—but a veil may well be drawn over such misery. The real anguish of these moments transcended all the fictions that the most glowing imagination ever pourtrayed; our seclusion, the savage nature of the surrounding villages, and our immediate vicinity to the troubled sea, combined to embue with strange horror our days of uncertainty. The truth was at last known,—a truth that made our loved and lovely Italy appear a tomb, its sky a pall. Every heart echoed the deep lament, and my only consolation was in the praise and earnest love that each voice bestowed and each countenance demonstrated for him we had lost,—not, I fondly hope, for ever.

"It having been decided by his friends that their remains should be reduced to ashes by fire, as the readiest mode of conveying them to the places where the deceased would have wished to repose, this painful task was performed in the presence of Lord Byron and Mr. Leigh Hunt, whose feelings on the occasion can be better conceived than described. This ceremony having been completed, the ashes of poor Shelley were conveyed to

Rome, and deposited in the Protestant burial ground in that city, near the remains of a child he had lost, and of his friend Keats. It is the cemetery he speaks of in the preface to his elegy on the death of his young friend "as calculated to make one in love with death, to think one should be buried in so sweet a place." It is also gratifying to state that the remains of Shelley were attended to their final abode by some of the most respectable English residents in Rome.

In concluding this sad narrative of poor Shelley's death, we will make use of the description of Captain Medwin, who happened at that time to be in Italy. "Some days after my arrival at Geneva," says Captain M. "I heard from Byron and Mrs. Shelley the melancholy news, and immediately recrossed the Alps. At Saranza the people of this place told me that the bodies of my friends had been washed on shore. On the evening of the same day I arrived at Pisa.

"I believe that Byron felt severely the loss of Shelley—though, it must be confessed, his remarks at the pyre, and swimming off to his yacht, little prove it. In the burning of Shelley, there was a portion of his body that would not consume. It was supposed to be his heart. Mr. Leigh Hunt carefully preserved and took with him the relic to the Lanfranchi. This Mrs. Shelley of course claimed. But her right was contested for some time on the part of Mr. Hunt, who contended that his friendship surpassed her love. Byron compared this amiable dispute to that between Ajax and

Ulysses for the arms of Achilles, and said, "what does Hunt want with it? He'll only put it in a glass case, and make sonnets on it."

"During several evenings we passed together, it was a melancholy satisfaction to talk over all the particulars of the wreck. It would seem that Shelley had been insensible of the danger, as well as Williams, for the boat was seen to have gone down with every stitch of sail set, as proved afterwards, when it was found. Williams was a good swimmer, and had no doubt made strong efforts for his life, having been washed on the beach partly undressed; but Shelley had his hand locked in his waistcoat, where he had in haste thrust a volume of Keats's poems, showing that he had been reading to the last moment, and had not made the slightest struggle to save himself. We both agreed that he wished to die young, though, if years, had been measured by events, he had lived, as he used to say, to a hundred. Shelley's writings are prophetic of his destiny. He singularly remarks: "The life of a man of talent, who should die in his *thirtieth* year, is, with regard to his own feeling, longer than that of a miserable priest-ridden slave who dreams out a century of dulness. The one has perpetually cultivated his mental faculties—has rendered himself master of his thoughts—can abstract and generalize amid the lethargy of every-day business; the other can slumber over the brightest moments of his being, and is unable to remember the happiest hour of his life. Per-

haps the perishing ephemeron enjoys a longer life than the tortoise!"

Regarding his domestic life, we cannot do better than quote from the interesting picture that has been drawn by his affectionate consort. "The comparative solitude," says Mrs. Shelley, "in which he lived, was the occasion that he was personally known to few; and his fearless enthusiasm in the cause which he considered the most sacred upon earth, the improvement of the moral and physical state of mankind, was the chief reason why he, like other illustrious reformers, was pursued by hatred and calumny. No man was ever more devoted than he to the endeavour of making those around him happy; no man ever posessed friends more unfeignedly attached to him. The ungrateful world did not feel its loss, and the gap it made seemed to close as quickly over his memory as the murderous sea above his living frame. Hereafter men will lament that his transcendent powers of intellect were extinguished before they had bestowed on them their choicest treasures. To his friends his, loss is irremediable: the wise, the brave, the gentle as gone to ever! He is to them as a bright vision whose radiant track, left behind in the memory, is worth all the realities that society can afford.

"His life was spent in the contemplation of nature, in arduous study, or in acts of kindness and affection. He was an elegant scholar and a profound metaphysician: without possessing much scientific knowledge, he was unrivalled in the justness and extent of his observations

on natural objects; he knew every plant by its name, and was familiar with the history and habits of every production of the earth; he could interpret without a fault each appearance in the sky, and the varied phenomena of heaven and earth filled him with deep emotion. He made his study and reading room of the shadowed copse, the stream, the lake, and the waterfall. Ill health and continued pain preyed upon his powers, and the solitude in which we lived, particularly on our first arrival in Italy, although congenial to his feelings, must frequently have weighed upon his spirits: those beautiful and affecting "Lines, written in dejection at Naples," were composed at such an interval; but, when in health, his spirits were buoyant and youthful to an extraordinary degree.

"Such was his love for nature, that every page of his poetry is associated in the minds of his friends with the loveliest scenes of the countries which he inhabited. In early life he visited the most beautiful parts of this country and Ireland. Afterwards the Alps of Switzerland became his inspirers. "Prometheus Unbound" was written among the deserted and flower-grown ruins of Rome, and, when he made his home under the Pisan hills, their roofless recesses harboured him as he composed "The Witch of Atlas," "Adonais," and "Hellas." In the wild but beautiful Bay of Spezia, the winds and waves which he loved became his playmates. His days were chiefly spent on the water; the management of his boat, its alterations and improvements,

were his principal occupations. At night, when the unclouded moon shone on the calm sea, he often went alone in his little shallop to the rocky caves that bordered it, and, sitting beneath their shelter, wrote "The Triumph of Life," the last of his productions. The beauty but strangeness of this lovely place, the refined pleasure which he felt in the companionship of a few selected friends, our entire sequestration from the rest of the world, all contributed to render this period of his life one of continued enjoyment."

Shelley was a Reformer at that period when Reform and high treason were supposed to be synonimous terms; yet, with his usual daring, he grappled with the forbidden subject, and in the year 1817 published a pamphlet, "A Proposal for putting Reform to the Vote through the Country." As this work is now extremely scarce, we will make an extract or two from it, as a proof of the zeal with which he entered upon that important consideration:—

"I have an income," he says, "of a thousand a year, on which I support my wife and children in decent comfort, and from which I satisfy certain large claims of general justice. Should any plan resembling that which I have proposed be determined on by you, I will give £100, being a tenth part of one year's income, towards its object; and I will not deem so proudly of myself as to believe that I shall stand alone in this respect, when any rational or consistent scheme for the public benefit shall have received the sanction of those great

and good men who have devoted themselves for its preservation."

"A certain degree of coalition," he continues, "among the sincere friends of Reform, in whatever shape, is indispensable to the success of this proposal. The friends of universal or of limited suffrage, of annual or triennial parliaments, ought to settle the subjects on which they disagree, when it is known whether the nation wills that measure on which they are all agreed. It is trivial to discuss what species of Reform should have place, when it yet remains a question whether there will be any Reform or no. Meanwhile, nothing remains for me but to state explicitly my sentiments on this subject. The statement is indeed quite foreign to the merits of the proposal in itself; and I should have suppressed it, until called upon to subscribe such a requisition as I have suggested, if the question which it is natural to ask, as to what are the sentiments of the person who originates the scheme, could have received in any other manner a more simple or direct reply.

"It appears to me, that annual parliaments ought to be adopted as an immediate measure, as one which strongly tends to preserve the liberty and happiness of the nation.—It would enable men to cultivate those energies on which the performance of the political duties belonging to the citizens of a free state, as the rightful guardian of its prosperity, essentially depends; it would familiarize men with Liberty, by disciplining them to an habitual acquaintance with its forms. Political institution is un-

doubtedly susceptible of such improvements as no rational person can consider possible, so long as the present degraded condition, to which the vital imperfections in the existing system of government has reduced the vast multitude of men, shall subsist. The securest method of arriving at such beneficial innovations is to proceed gradually, and with caution; or, in the place of that order and freedom, which the friends of Reform assert to be violated now, anarchy and despotism will follow. Annual Parliaments have my entire assent. I will not state those general reasonings in their favour, which Mr. Cobbet and other writers have already made familiar to the public mind.

"With respect to Universal Suffrage, I confess I consider its adoption, in the present unprepared state of public knowledge and feeling, fraught with peril. I think that none but those, who register their names as paying a certain small sum in *direct taxes*, ought at present, to send members to parliament. The consequence of the immediate extension of the elective franchise to every male adult, would be to place power in the hands of men who have been rendered brutal, and torpid, and ferocious, by ages of slavery. It is to suppose that the qualities belonging to a demagogue are such as are sufficient to endow a legislator. I allow Major Cartwright's arguments to be unanswerable; abstractedly, it is the right of every human being to have a share in the government. But Mr. Paine's arguments are also unanswerable. "A pure republic may be shewn by inferences the

most obvious irresistible, to be that system of social order the fittest to produce the happiness, and promote the genuine eminence, of man." Yet nothing can be less consistent with reason, or afford smaller hopes of any beneficial issue, than the plan which should abolish the regal and aristocratical branches of our constitution, before the public mind, through many gradations of improvement, shall have arrived at the maturity which can disregard those symbols of its childhood."

Shelley, though an outcast from his family, the continual object of the persecution of the press, and a mark for the calumny and detraction of the world, imbibed none of the gloom and misanthropy common to little minds: on the contrary, we can trace in his works no anger or dissatisfaction with the world, none of the fret or fever of disappointed ambition; every line he wrote breathes a spirit of benevolence, a love for the whole creation, animate and inanimate. Almost any but a Promethean spirit would have sunk under the weight of his misfortunes and injuries, and that past events should occasionally cast their shadows over him was natural; but nothing could long ruffle the azure and calms depth of his soul. All was at peace within;—he was a philanthropist in the fullest sense of the word;—he warred not against men, but what he conceived to be a false principle That his imagination was too heated in some cases few persons will venture to deny, but his faults leaned on the side of universal benevolence, and who shall be the first to detract from the many virtues of this extraordinary and highly-gifted man?

At the period of his death Shelley was in his thirtieth year. His figure was tall and slight, and his constitution consumptive. He was subject to violent spasmodic pains, which would sometimes force him to be on the ground till they were over; but he had always a kind word to give to those about him, when his pangs allowed him to speak. In his organization, as well as in some other respects, he resembled the German poet Schiller.—Though well-turned, his shoulders were bent a little, owing to premature thought and trouble. The same causes had touched his hair with grey; and, though his habits of temperance and exercise gave him a remarkable degree of strength, it is not supposed that he could have lived many years. He used to say that he had lived three times as long as the calendar held out, which he would prove, between jest and earnest, by some remark on Time. His eyes were large and animated with a dash of wildness in them; his face small but well-shaped, particularly the mouth and chin, the turn of which was very sensitive and graceful. His complexion was naturally fair and delicate, with a colour in the cheeks. He had brown hair, which, though tinged with grey, surmounted his face well, being in considerable quantity, and tending to a curl.

Such was Shelley.—In our brief memoir we have scarcely done that justice which his talents deserve. If, however, we may have assisted in dispelling the false notions that have unhappily prevailed to the prejudice of one who was an ardent friend of his fellow-man, our aim

will have been achieved.—That he was a poet of transcendent talents is now acknowledged even by those who were once his bitterest adversaries, and we may therefore venture to predict that ere long his works will be admitted to the book-shelves of the most fastidious.

DEDICATION.

There is no danger to a man that knows
What life and death is: there's not any law
Exceeds his knowledge; neither is it lawful
That he should stoop to any other law.

CHAPMAN.

DEDICATION.

TO

MARY ——— ———

So now my summer-task is ended, Mary,
And I return to thee, mine own heart's home;
As to his Queen some victor Knight of Faëry,
Earning bright spoils for her enchanted dome;
Nor thou disdain, that, ere my fame become
A star among the stars of mortal night,
If it indeed may cleave its natal gloom,
Its doubtful promise thus I would unite
With thy beloved name, thou Child of love and light.

The toil which stole from thee so many an hour
Is ended,—and the fruit is at thy feet!
No longer where the woods to frame a bower
With interlaced branches mix and meet,
Or where, with sound like many voices sweet,
Water-falls leap among wild islands green,
Which framed for my lone boat a lone retreat
Of moss-grown trees and weeds, shall I be seen:
But beside thee, where still my heart has ever been.

Thoughts of great deeds were mine, dear Friend, when first
The clouds which wrap this world from youth did pass.
I do remember well the hour which burst
My spirits' sleep: a fresh May-dawn it was,
When I walked forth upon the glittering grass,
And wept, I knew not why, until there rose
From the near school-room voices, that, alas!
Were but one echo from a world of woes—
The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

And then I clasped my hands and looked around—
—But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,
Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground—
So without shame I spake:—"I will be wise,
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
Such power, for I grow weary to behold
The selfish and the strong still tyrannise
Without reproach or check." I then controlled
My tears, my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold.

And from that hour did I with earnest thought
Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore,
Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught
I cared to learn, but from that secret store
Wrought linked armour for my soul, before
It might walk forth to war among mankind;
Thus power and hope were strengthened more and more
Within me, till there came upon my mind
A sense of loneliness, a thirst with which I pined.

Alas! that love should be a blight and snare
To those who seek all sympathies in one!—
Such once I sought in vain; then black despair,

The shadow of a starless night, was thrown
Over the world in which I moved alone:—
Yet never found I one not false to me,
Hard hearts, and cold, like weights of icy stone
Which crushed and withered mine, that could not be
Aught but a lifeless clog, until revived by thee.

Thou Friend, whose presence on my wintry heart
Fell like bright Spring upon some herbless plain,
How beautiful and calm and free thou wert
In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain
Of Custom thou didst burst and rend in twain,
And walked as free as light the clouds among,
Which many an envious slave then breathed in vain
From his dim dungeon, and my spirit sprung
To meet thee from the woes which had begirt it long.

No more alone through the world's wilderness,
Although I trod the paths of high intent,
I journeyed now: no more companionless,
Where solitude is like despair, I went.—
There is the wisdom of a stern content
When Poverty can blight the just and good,
When Infamy dares mock the innocent,
And cherished friends turn with the multitude
To trample: this was ours, and we unshaken stood!

Now has descended a serener hour,
And with inconstant fortune friends return;
Tho' suffering leaves the knowledge and the power
Which says:—Let scorn be not repaid with scorn.
And from thy side two gentle babes are born

To fill our home with smiles, and thus are we
Most fortunate beneath life's beaming morn;
And these delights, and thou, have been to me
The parents of the Song I consecrate to thee.

Is it, that now my inexperienced fingers
But strike the prelude of a loftier strain?
Or, must the lyre on which my spirit lingers
Soon pause in silence, ne'er to sound again,
Tho' it might shake the Anarch Custom's reign,
And charm the minds of men to Truth's own sway
Holier than was Amphion's? I would fain
Reply in hope—but I am worn away,
And Death and Love are yet contending for their prey.

And what art thou? I know, but dare not speak:
Time may interpret to his silent years.
Yet in the paleness of thy thoughtful cheek,
And in the light thine ample forehead wears,
And in thy sweetest smiles, and in thy tears,
And in thy gentle speech, a prophecy
Is whispered, to subdue my fondest fears:
And thro' thine eyes, even in thy soul I see
A lamp of vestal fire burning internally.

They say that thou wert lovely from thy birth,
Of glorious parents, thou aspiring Child.
I wonder not—for One then left this earth
Whose life was like a setting planet mild,
Which clothed thee in the radiance undefiled
Of its departing glory; still her fame
Shines on thee thro' the tempests dark and wild

Which shake these latter days; and thou canst claim
The shelter, from thy Sire, of an immortal name.

One voice came forth from many a mighty spirit,
Which was the echo of three thousand years;
And the tumultuous world stood mute to hear it,
As some lone man who in a desert hears
The music of his home:—unwonted fears
Fell on the pale oppressors of our race,
And Faith, and Custom, and low-thoughted cares,
Like thunder-stricken dragons, for a space
Left the torn human heart, their food and dwelling-place.

Truth's deathless voice pauses among mankind!
If there must be no response to my cry—
If men must rise and stamp with fury blind
On his pure name who loves them,—thou and I,
Sweet friend! can look from our tranquillity
Like lamps into the world's tempestuous night,—
Two tranquil stars, while clouds are passing by
Which wrap them from the foundering seaman's sight,
That burn from year to year with unextinguished light.

THE

REVOLT OF ISLAM;

A POEM,

IN TWELVE CANTOS.

BY

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

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1834.

PREFACE.

THE Poem which I now present to the world is an attempt from which I scarcely dare to expect success, and in which a writer of established fame might fail without disgrace. It is an experiment on the temper of the public mind, as to how far a thirst for a happier condition of moral and political society survives, among the enlightened and refined, the tempests which have shaken the age in which we live. I have sought to enlist the harmony of metrical language, the etherial combinations of the fancy, the rapid and subtle transitions of human passion, all those elements which essentially compose a Poem, in the cause of a liberal and comprehensive morality, and in the view of kindling within the bosoms of my readers a virtuous enthusiasm for those doctrines of liberty and justice, that faith and hope in something good, which neither violence, nor misrepresentation, nor prejudice, can ever totally extinguish among mankind.

For this purpose I have chosen a story of human passion in its most universal character, diversified with moving and romantic adventures, and appealing, in contempt of all artificial opinions or institutions, to the common sympathies of every human breast. I have made no attempt to recommend the

motives which I would substitute for those at present governing mankind by methodical and systematic argument. I would only awaken the feelings, so that the reader should see the beauty of true virtue, and be incited to those inquiries which have led to my moral and political creed, and that of some of the sublimest intellects in the world. The Poem therefore, (with the exception of the first Canto, which is purely introductory,) is narrative, not didactic. It is a succession of pictures illustrating the growth and progress of individual mind aspiring after excellence, and devoted to the love of mankind; its influence in refining and making pure the most daring and uncommon impulses of the imagination, the understanding, and the senses; its impatience at "all the oppressions which are done under the sun;" its tendency to awaken public hope and to enlighten and improve mankind; the rapid effects of the application of that tendency; the awakening of an immense nation from their slavery and degradation to a true sense of moral dignity and freedom; the bloodless dethronement of their oppressors, and the unveiling of the religious frauds by which they had been deluded into submission; the tranquillity of successful patriotism, and the universal toleration; and the benevolence of true philanthropy; the treachery and barbarity of hired soldiers; vice not the object of punishment and hatred, but kindness and pity; the faithlessness of tyrants; the confederacy of the Rulers

of the World, and the restoration of the expelled Dynasty by foreign arms; the massacre and extermination of the Patriots, and the victory of established power; the consequences of legitimate despotism, civil war, famine, plague, superstition, and an utter extinction of the domestic affections; the judicial murder of the advocates of Liberty; the temporary triumph of oppression, that secure earnest of its final and inevitable fall; the transient nature of ignorance and error, and the eternity of genius and virtue;—such is the series of delineations of which the Poem consists. And if the lofty passions with which it has been my scope to distinguish this story, shall not excite in the reader a generous impulse, an ardent thirst for excellence, an interest profound and strong, such as belongs to no meaner desires—let not the failure be imputed to a natural unfitness for human sympathy in these sublime and animating themes. It is the business of the Poet to communicate to others the pleasure and the enthusiasm arising out of those images and feelings, in the vivid presence of which within his own mind consists at once his inspiration and his reward.

The panic which, like an epidemic transport, seized upon all classes of men during the excesses consequent upon the French Revolution, is gradually giving place to sanity. It has ceased to be believed that whole generations of mankind ought to consign themselves to a hopeless inheritance of ignorance and misery, because a nation of men, who had been dupes

and slaves for centuries, were incapable of conducting themselves with the wisdom and tranquillity of free men as soon as some of their fetters were partially loosened. That their conduct could not have been marked by any other characters than ferocity and thoughtlessness, is the historical fact from which liberty derives all its recommendations, and falsehood the worst features of its deformity. There is a reflux in the tide of human things which bears the shipwrecked hopes of men into a secure haven, after the storms are past. Methinks, those who now live have survived an age of despair.

The French Revolution may be considered as one of those manifestations of a general state of feeling among civilized mankind, produced by a defect of correspondence between the knowledge existing in society and the improvement or gradual abolition of political institutions. The year 1788 may be assumed as the epoch of one of the most important crises produced by this feeling. The sympathies connected with that event extended to every bosom. The most generous and amiable natures were those which participated the most extensively in these sympathies. But such a degree of unmingled good was expected, as it was impossible to realize. If the Revolution had been in every respect prosperous, then misrule and superstition would lose half their claims to our abhorrence, as fetters which the captive can unlock with the slightest motion of his fingers, and which do not eat with poisonous rust into

the soul. The revulsion occasioned by the atrocities of the demagogues and the re-establishment of successive tyrannies in France was terrible, and felt in the remotest corner of the civilized world. Could they listen to the plea of reason who had groaned under the calamities of a social state, according to the provisions of which one man riots in luxury whilst another famishes for want of bread? Can he, who the day before was a trampled slave, suddenly become liberal-minded, forbearing, and independent? This is the consequence of the habits of a state of society to be produced by resolute perseverance and indefatigable hope, and long-suffering and long-believing courage, and the systematic efforts of generations of men of intellect and virtue. Such is the lesson which experience teaches now. But, on the first reverses of hope in the progress of French liberty, the sanguine eagerness for good overleapt the solution of these questions, and for a time extinguished itself in the unexpectedness of their result. Thus, many of the most ardent and tender-hearted of the worshippers of public good have been morally ruined by what a partial glimpse of the events they deplored, appeared to show as the melancholy desolation of all their cherished hopes. Hence gloom and misanthrophy have become the characteristics of the age in which we live, the solace of a disappointment that unconsciously finds relief only in the wilful exaggeration of its own despair. This influence has tainted the literature of the age

with the hopelessness of the minds from which it flows. Metaphysics,* and inquiries into moral and political science, have become little else than vain attempts to revive exploded superstitions, or sophisms like those† of Mr. Malthus, caculated to lull the oppressors of mankind into a security of everlasting triumph. Our works of fiction and poetry have been overshadowed by the same infectious gloom. But mankind appear to me to be emerging from their trance. I am aware, methinks, of a slow, gradual, silent, change. In that belief I have composed the following Poem.

I do not presume to enter into competition with our greatest contemporary Poets. Yet I am unwilling to tread in the footsteps of any who have preceded me. I have sought to avoid the imitation of any style of language or versification peculiar to the original minds of which it is the character, designing that,

* I ought to except Sir W. Drummond's "Academical Questions;" a volume of very acute and powerful metaphysical criticism.

† It is remarkable, as a symptom of the revival of public hope, that Mr. Malthus has assigned, in the later editions of his work, an indefinite dominion to moral restraint over the principle of population. This concession answers all the inferences from his doctrine unfavourable to human improvement, and reduces the "Essay on Population" to a commentary illustrative of the unanswerableness of "Political Justice."

even if what I have produced be worthless, it should still be properly my own. Nor have I permitted any system relating to mere words, to divert the attention of the reader from whatever interest I may have succeeded in creating, to my own ingenuity in contriving to disgust them according to the rules of criticism. I have simply clothed my thoughts in what appeared to me the most obvious and appropriate language. A person, familiar with nature and with the most celebrated productions of the human mind, can scarcely err in following the instinct, with respect to selection of language, produced by that familiarity.

There is an education peculiarly fitted for a Poet, without which genius and sensibility can hardly fill the circle of their capacities. No education indeed can entitle to this appellation a dull and unobservant mind, or one, though neither dull nor unobservant, in which the channels of communication between thought and expression have been obstructed or closed. How far it is my fortune to belong to either of the latter classes I cannot know. I aspire to be something better. The circumstances of my accidental education have been favourable to this ambition. I have been familiar from boyhood with mountains and lakes, and the sea, and the solitude of forests: Danger, which sports upon the brink of precipices, has been my playmate. I have trodden the glaciers of the Alps, and lived under the eye of Mont Blanc. I have been a wanderer among distant fields. I have

sailed down mighty rivers, and seen the sun rise and set, and the stars come forth, whilst I have sailed night and day down a rapid stream among mountains. I have seen populous cities, and have watched the passions which rise and spread, and sink and change, amongst assembled multitudes of men. I have seen the theatre of the more visible ravages of tyranny and war, cities and villages reduced to scattered groups of black and roofless houses, and the naked inhabitants sitting famished upon their desolated thresholds. I have conversed with living men of genius. The poetry of antient Greece and Rome, and modern Italy, and our own country, has been to me like external nature, a passion and an enjoyment. Such are the sources from which the materials for the imagery of my Poem have been drawn. I have considered Poetry in its most comprehensive sense, and have read the Poets, and the Historians, and the Metaphysicians,* whose writings have been accessible to me, and have looked upon the beautiful and majestic scenery of the earth as common sources of those elements which it is the province of the Poet to embody and combine. Yet the experience and the feelings to which I refer do not in themselves constitute men Poets, but only prepare them to be the auditors of those who are. How far I

* In this sense there may be such a thing as perfectibility in works of fiction, notwithstanding the concession often made by the advocates of human improvement, that perfectibility is a term applicable only to science.

shall be found to possess that more essential attribute of Poetry, the power of awakening in others sensations like those which animate my own bosom, is that which, to speak sincerely, I know not; and which, with an acquiescent and contented spirit, I expect to be taught by the effect which I shall produce upon those whom I now address.

I have avoided, as I have said before, the imitation of any contemporary style. But there must be a resemblance, which does not depend upon their own will, between all the writers of any particular age. They cannot escape from subjection to a common influence which arises out of an infinite combination of circumstances belonging to the times in which they live, though each is in a degree the author of the very influence by which his being is thus pervaded. Thus, the tragic Poets of the age of Pericles; the Italian revivers of ancient learning; those mighty intellects of our own country that succeeded the Reformation, the translators of the Bible, Shakspeare, Spenser, the Dramatists of the reign of Elizabeth, and Lord Bacon;* the colder spirits of the interval that succeeded;—all resemble each other, and differ from every other in their several classes. In this view of things, Ford can no more be called the imitator of Shakspeare, than Shakspeare the imitator of Ford. There were perhaps few other points of resemblance between these

* Milton stands alone in the age which he illumined.

two men, than that which the universal and inevitably influence of their age produced. And this is an influence which neither the meanest scribbler nor the sublimest genius of any æra can escape, and which I have not attempted to escape.

I have adopted the stanza of Spenser, (a measure inexpressibly beautiful,) not because I consider it a finer model of poetical harmony, than the blank verse of Shakspeare and Milton, but because in the latter there is no shelter for mediocrity: you must either succeed or fail. This perhaps an aspiring spirit should desire. But I was enticed also by the brilliancy and magnificence of sound which a mind that has been nourished upon musical thoughts, can produce by a just and harmonious arrangement of the pauses of this measure. Yet there will be found some instances where I have completely failed in this attempt, and one, which I here request the reader to consider as an erratum, where there is left most inadvertently an alexandrine in the middle of a stanza.

But in this, as in every other respect, I have written fearlessly. It is the misfortune of this age, that its Writers, too thoughtless of immortality, are exquisitely sensible to temporary praise or blame. They write with the fear of Reviews before their eyes. This system of criticism sprang up in that torpid interval when Poetry was not. Poetry, and the art which professes to regulate and limit its powers, cannot subsist together. Longinus could not have been the contemporary of

Homer, nor Boileau of Horace. Yet this species of criticism never presumed to assert an understanding of its own: it has always, unlike true science, followed, not preceded, the opinion of mankind, and would even now bribe with worthless adulation some of our greatest Poets to impose gratuitous fetters on their own imaginations, and become unconscious accomplices in the daily murder of all genius either not so aspiring or not so fortunate as their own. I have sought therefore to write as I believe that Homer, Shakspeare, and Milton, wrote, with an utter disregard of anonymous censure. I am certain that calumny and misrepresentation, though it may move me to compassion, cannot disturb my peace. I shall understand the expressive silence of those sagacious enemies who dare not trust themselves to speak. I shall endeavour to extract from the midst of insult, and contempt, and maledictions, those admonitions which may tend to correct whatever imperfections such censurers may discover in this my first serious appeal to the Public. If certain Critics were as clear-sighted as they are malignant, how great would be the benefit to be derived from their virulent writings! As it is, I fear I shall be malicious enough to be amused with their paltry tricks and lame invectives. Should the Public judge that my composition is worthless, I shall indeed bow before the tribunal from which Milton received his crown of immortality, and shall seek to gather, if I live, strength from that

defeat which may nerve me to some new enterprise of thought which may *not* be worthless. I cannot conceive that Lucretius, when he meditated that poem whose doctrines are yet the basis of our metaphysical knowledge, and whose eloquence has been the wonder of mankind, wrote in awe of such censure as the hired sophists of the impure and superstitious noblemen of Rome might affix to what he should produce. It was at the period when Greece was led captive, and Asia made tributary to the Republic, fast verging itself to slavery and ruin, that a multitude of Syrian captives, bigoted to the worship of their obscene Ashtaroth, and the unworthy successors of Socrates and Zeno, found there a precarious subsistence by administering, under the name of freedmen, to the vices and vanities of the great.—These wretched men were skilled to plead, with a superficial but plausible set of sophisms, in favour of that contempt for virtue which is the portion of slaves, and that faith in portents, the most fatal substitute for benevolence in the imaginations of men, which, arising from the enslaved communities of the East, then first began to overwhelm the western nations in its stream. Were these the kind of men whose disapprobation the wise and lofty-minded Lucretius should have regarded with a salutary awe? The latest and perhaps the meanest of those who follow in his

footsteps, would disdain to hold life on such conditions.

The Poem now presented to the Public occupied little more than six months in the composition. That period has been devoted to the task with unremitting ardour and enthusiasm. I have exercised a watchful and earnest criticism on my work as it grew under my hands. I would willingly have sent it forth to the world with that perfection which long labour and revision is said to bestow; but I found that, if I should gain something in exactness by this method, I might lose much of the newness and energy of imagery and language as it flowed fresh from my mind. And, although the mere composition occupied no more than six months, the thoughts thus arranged were slowly gathered in as many years.

I trust that the reader will carefully distinguish between those opinions which have a dramatic propriety in reference to the characters which they are designed to elucidate, and such as are properly my own. The erroneous and degrading idea which men have conceived of a Supreme Being, for instance, is spoken against, but not the Supreme Being himself. The belief which some superstitious persons whom I have brought upon the stage entertain of the Deity, as injurious to the character of his benevolence, is widely different from my own. In recommending also a great and important change in the spirit which

animates the social institutions of mankind, I have avoided all flattery to those violent and malignant passions of our nature, which are ever on the watch to mingle with and to alloy the most beneficial innovations. There is no quarter given to Revenge, or Envy, or Prejudice. Love is celebrated every where as the sole law which should govern the moral world.

THE

REVOLT OF ISLAM.

written at Great Marlow. 1816

CANTO I.

When the last hope of trampled France had failed
Like a brief dream of unremaining glory,
From visions of despair I rose, and scaled
The peak of an aërial promontory,
Whose caverned base with the vext surge was hoary;
And saw the golden dawn break forth, and waken
Each cloud and every wave:—but transitory
The calm: for, sudden, the firm earth was shaken,
As if by the last wreck its frame were overtaken

So, as I stood, one blast of muttering thunder
Burst in far peals along the waveless deep,
When, gathering fast, around, above, and under,
Long trains of tremulous mist began to creep,
Until their complicating lines did steep
The orient sun in shadow:—not a sound
Was heard; one horrible repose did keep
The forests and the floods, and all around
Darkness more dread than night was poured upon the ground.

Hark! 'tis the rushing of a wind that sweeps
Earth and the ocean. See! the lightnings yawn,
Deluging Heaven with fire, and the lashed deeps
Glitter and boil beneath: it rages on,
One mighty stream, whirlwind and waves upthrown,
Lightning and hail, and darkness eddying by.
There is a pause—the sea-birds, that were gone
Into their caves to shriek, come forth, to spy
What calm has fall'n on earth, what light is in the sky.

For, where the irresistible storm had cloven
That fearful darkness, the blue sky was seen
Fretted with many a fair cloud interwoven
Most delicately, and the ocean green,
Beneath that opening spot of blue serene,
Quivered like burning emerald: calm was spread
On all below; but far on high, between
Earth and the upper air, the vast clouds fled,
Countless and swift as leaves on autumn's tempest shed.

For ever, as the war became more fierce
Between the whirlwinds and the rack on high,
That spot grew more serene; blue light did pierce
The woof of those white clouds, which seemed to lie
Far, deep, and motionless; while thro' the sky
The palid semicircle of the moon
Pass'd on, in slow and moving majesty;
Its upper horn arrayed in mists, which soon
But slowly fled, like dew beneath the beams of noon.

I could not choose but gaze; a fascination
Dwelt in that moon, and sky, and clouds, which drew
My fancy thither, and in expectation

Of what I knew not I remained:—the hue
Of the white moon, amid that heaven so blue,
Suddenly stained with shadow did appear;
A speck, a cloud, a shape, approaching grew,
Like a great ship in the sun's sinking sphere
Beheld afar at sea, and swift it came anear.

Even like a bark, which, from a chasm of mountains
Dark, vast, and overhanging, on a river
Which there collects the strength of all its fountains,
Comes forth, whilst, with the speed its frame doth quiver,
Sails, oars, and stream, tending to one endeavour;
So from that chasm of light a winged Form
On all the winds of heaven approaching ever
Floated, dilating as it came: the storm
Pursued it with fierce blasts, and lightnings swift and warm.

A course precipitous, of dizzy speed,
Suspending thought and breath; a monstrous sight!
For in the air do I behold indeed
An Eagle and a Serpent wreathed in fight:—
And, now relaxing its impetuous flight
Before the aërial rock on which I stood,
The Eagle, hovering, wheeled to left and right,
And hung with lingering wings over the flood,
And startled with its yells the wide air's solitude.

A shaft of light upon its wings descended,
And every golden feather gleamed therein—
Feather and scale inextricably blended.
The Serpent's mailed and many-coloured skin
Shone thro' the plumes; its coils were twined within
By many a swollen and knotted fold, and high
And far, the neck receding lithe and thin,

Sustained a crested head, which warily
Shifted and glanced before the Eagle's stedfast eye.

Around, around, in ceaseless circles wheeling
With clang of wings and scream, the Eagle sailed
Incessantly—sometimes on high concealing
Its lessening orbs, sometimes as if it failed,
Drooped thro' the air; and still it shrieked and wailed,
And, casting back its eager head, with beak
And talon unremittingly assailed
The wreathed Serpent, who did ever seek
Upon his enemy's heart a mortal wound to wreak.

What life, what power, was kindled and arose
Within the sphere of that appalling fray!
For, from the encounter of those wond'rous foes,
A vapour, like the sea's suspended spray,
Hung gathered: in the void air, far away,
Floated the shattered plumes; bright scales did leap
Where'er the Eagle's talons made their way,
Like sparks into the darkness;—as they sweep,
Blood stains the snowy foam of the tumultuous deep.

Swift chances in that combat—many a check,
And many a change, a dark and wild turmoil;
Sometimes the Snake around his enemy's neck
Locked in stiff rings his adamantine coil,
Until the Eagle, faint with pain and toil,
Remitted his strong flight, and near the sea
Languidly fluttered, hopeless so to foil
His adversary, who then reared on high
His red and burning crest, radiant with victory.

Then, on the white edge of the bursting surge,
Where they had sunk together, would the Snake
Relax his suffocating grasp, and scourge
The wind with his wild writhings; for, to break
That chain of torment, the vast bird would shake
The strength of his unconquerable wings
As in despair, and with his sinewy neck
Dissolve in sudden shock those linked rings,
Then soar—as swift as smoke from a volcano springs.

Wile baffled wile, and strength encountered strength,
Thus long, but unprevailing:—the event
Of that portentous fight appeared at length:
Until the lamp of day was almost spent
It had endured, when lifeless, stark, and rent,
Hung high that mighty Serpent, and at last
Fell to the sea, while o'er the continent
With clang of wings and scream the Eagle past,
Heavily borne away on the exhausted blast.

And with it fled the tempest, so that ocean
And earth and sky shone through the atmosphere—
Only, 'twas strange to see the red commotion
Of waves like mountains o'er the sinking sphere
Of sun-set sweep, and their fierce roar to hear
Amid the calm: down the steep path I wound
To the sea-shore—the evening was most clear
And beautiful, and there the sea I found
Calm as a cradled child in dreamless slumber bound.

There was a Woman, beautiful as morning,
Sitting beneath the rocks, upon the sand
Of the waste sea—fair as one flower adorning

An icy wilderness—each delicate hand
Lay crossed upon her bosom, and the band
Of her dark hair had fall'n, and so she sate
Looking upon the waves; on the bare strand
Upon the sea-mark a small boat did wait,
Fair as herself, like Love by Hope left desolate.

It seemed that this fair Shape had looked upon
That unimaginable fight, and now
That her sweet eyes were weary of the sun,
As brightly it illustrated her woe;
For in the tears which silently to flow
Paused not, its lustre hung: she, watching aye
The foam-wreathes which the faint tide wove below
Upon the spangled sands, groaned heavily,
And after every groan looked up over the sea.

And when she saw the wounded Serpent mak
His path between the waves, her lips grew pale,
Parted, and quivered; the tears ceased to break
From her immoveable eyes; no voice of wail
Escaped her; but she rose, and, on the gale
Loosening her star-bright robe and shadowy hair,
Poured forth her voice; the caverns of the vale,
That opened to the ocean, caught it there,
And filled with silver sounds the overflowing air.

She spake in language whose strange melody
Might not belong to earth. I heard, alone,
What made its music more melodious be,
The pity and the love of every tone;
But to the Snake those accents sweet were known,
His native tongue and her's; nor did he beat
The hoar spray idly then, but, winding on

Thro' the green shadows of the waves that meet
Near to the shore, did pause beside her snowy feet.

Then on the sands the Woman sate again,
And wept and clasped her hands, and all between
Renewed the unintelligible strain
Of her melodious voice and eloquent mien;
And she unveiled her bosom, and the green
And glancing shadows of the sea did play
O'er its marmoreal depth:—one moment seen,
For ere the next the Serpent did obey
Her voice, and, coiled in rest, in her embrace it lay.

Then she arose, and smiled on me with eyes
Serene yet sorrowing, like that planet fair,
While yet the day-light lingereth in the skies
Which cleaves with arrowy beams the dark-red air,
And said: To grieve is wise, but the despair
Was weak and vain which led thee here from sleep:
This shalt thou know, and more, if thou dost dare
With me and with this Serpent, o'er the deep,
A voyage divine and strange, companionship to keep.

Her voice was like the wildest saddest tone,
Yet sweet, of some loved voice heard long ago.
I wept. Shall this fair woman, all alone,
Over the sea with that fierce Serpent go?
His head is on her heart, and who can know
How soon he may devour his feeble prey?—
Such were my thoughts, when the tide 'gan to flow;
And that strange boat, like the moon's shade, did sway
Amid reflected stars that in the waters lay.

A boat of rare device, which had no sail
But its own curved prow of thin moonstone,

Wrought like a web of texture fine and frail,
To catch those gentlest winds which are not known
To breathe, but by the steady speed alone
With which it cleaves the sparkling sea; and now
We are embarked, the mountains hang and frown
Over the starry deep that gleams below
A vast and dim expanse, as o'er the waves we go.

And, as we sailed, a strange and awful tale
That Woman told, like such mysterious dream
As makes the slumberer's cheek with wonder pale!
'Twas midnight, and around, a shoreless stream,
Wide ocean rolled, when that majestic theme
Shrined in her heart found utterance, and she bent
Her looks on mine; those eyes a kindling beam
Of love divine into my spirit sent,
And, ere her lips could move, made the air eloquent.

Speak not to me, but hear! Much shalt thou learn,
Much must remain untaught, and more untold,
In the dark Future's ever-flowing urn:
Know then, that, from the depth of ages old,
Two Powers o'er mortal things dominion hold,
Ruling the world with a divided lot,
Immortal, all-pervading, manifold,
Twin Genii, equal Gods—when life and thought
Sprang forth, they burst the womb of inessential Nought.

The earliest dweller of the world alone
Stood on the verge of chaos: Lo! afar
O'er the wide wild abyss two meteors shone,
Sprung from the depth of its tempestuous jar:
A blood-red Comet and the Morning Star

Mingling their beams in combat—as he stood,
All thoughts within his mind waged mutual war,
In dreadful sympathy—when to the flood
That fair Star fell, he turned and shed his brother's blood.

Thus evil triumphed, and the Spirit of evil,
One Power of many shapes which none may know,
One Shape of many names; the Fiend did revel
In victory, reigning o'er a world of woe,
For the new race of man went to and fro,
Famished and homeless, loathed and loathing, wild,
And hating good—for his immortal foe
He changed from starry shape, beauteous and mild,
To a dire Snake, with man and beast unreconciled.

The darkness lingering o'er the dawn of things
Was Evil's breath and life: this made him strong
To soar aloft with overshadowing wings;
And the great Spirit of Good did creep among
The nations of mankind, and every tongue
Cursed and blasphemed him as he pass'd; for none
Knew good from evil, tho' their names were hung
In mockery o'er the fane where many a groan,
As King, and Lord, and God, the conquering Fiend did own.

The fiend, whose name was Legion; Death, Decay,
Earthquake, and Blight, and Want, and Madness pale,
Winged and wan diseases, an array
Numerous as leaves that strew th' autumnal gale;
Poison, a snake in flowers, beneath the veil
Of food and mirth, hiding his mortal head;
And, without whom all these might nought avail,
Fear, Hatred, Faith, and Tyranny, who spread
Those subtle nets which snare the living and the dead.

His spirit is their power, and they his slaves
In air, and light, and thought, and language, dwell;
And keep their state from palaces to graves,
In all resorts of men—invisible,
But, when in ebon mirror, Nightmare fell
To tyrant or impostor bids them rise,
Black-winged demon forms—whom, from the hell,
His reign and dwelling beneath nether skies,
He loosens to their dark and blasting ministries.

In the world's youth his empire was as firm
As its foundations—soon the Spirit of Good,
Tho' in the likeness of a loathsome worm,
Sprang from the billows of the formless flood,
Which shrank and fled; and with that fiend of blood
Renewed the doubtful war—thrones then first shook,
And earth's immense and trampled multitude
In hope on their own powers began to look,
And Fear, the demon pale, his sanguine shrine forsook.

Then Greece arose, and to its bards and sages,
In dream, the golden-pinioned Genii came,
Even where they slept amid the night of ages,
Steeping their hearts in the divinest flame
Which thy breath kindled, Power of holiest name!
And oft in cycles since, when darkness gave
New weapons to thy foe, their sunlike fame
Upon the combat shone—a light to save,
Like Paradise spread forth beyond the shadowy grave.

Such is this conflict—when mankind doth strive
With its oppressors in a strife of blood,
Or when free thoughts, like lightnings, are alive;
And in each bosom of the multitude

Justice and truth, with custom's hydra brood,
Wage silent war;—when priests and kings dissemble
In smiles or frowns their fierce disquietude,
When round pure hearts a host of hopes assemble,
The Snake and Eagle meet—the world's foundations tremble.

Thou hast beheld that fight—when to thy home
Thou dost return, steep not its hearth in tears;
Tho' thou may'st hear that earth is now become
The tyrant's garbage, which to his compeers,
The vile reward of their dishonoured years,
He will dividing give.—the victor Fiend,
Omnipotent of yore, now quails, and fears
His triumph dearly won, which soon will lend
An impulse swift and sure to his approaching end.

List, stanger, list! Mine is a human form,
Like that thou wearest—touch me—shrink not now!
My hand thou feel'st is not a ghost's, but warm
With human blood.—'Twas many years ago
Since first my thirsting soul aspired to know
The secrets of this wondrous world, when deep
My heart was pierced with sympathy for woe
Which could not be mine own—and thought did keep,
In dream, unnatural watch beside an infant's sleep.

Woe could not be mine own, since far from men
I dwelt, a free and happy orphan child,
By the sea-shore, in a deep mountain glen;
And near the waves, and thro' the forests wild,
I roamed, to storm and darkness reconciled,
For I was calm while tempest shook the sky:
But, when the breathless heavens in beauty smiled,

I wept sweet tears, yet too tumultuously
For peace, and clasped my hands aloft in extacy.

These were forebodings of my fate.—Before
A woman's heart beat in my virgin breast,
It had been nurtured in divinest lore:
A dying poet gave me books, and blest
With wild but holy talk the sweet unrest
In which I watched him as he died away—
A youth with hoary hair—a fleeting guest
Of our lone mountains—and this lore did sway
My spirit like a storm, contending there alway.

Thus the dark tale which history doth unfold
I knew, but not, methinks, as others know,
For they weep not; and Wisdom had unrolled
The clouds which hide the gulf of mortal woe:
To few can she that warning vision show,
For I loved all things with intense devotion;
So that when Hope's deep source in fullest flow,
Like earthquake, did uplift the stagnant ocean
Of human thoughts—mine shook beneath the wide emotion.

When first the living blood thro' all these veins
Kindled a thought in sense, great France sprang forth,
And seized, as if to break, the ponderous chains
Which bind in woe the nations of the earth.
I saw, and started from my cottage hearth;
And to the clouds and waves in tameless gladness
Shrieked, till they caught immeasurable mirth—
And laughed in light and music: soon sweet madness
Was poured upon my heart, a soft and thrilling sadness.

Deep slumber fell on me:—my dreams were fire,
Soft and delightful thoughts did rest and hover
Like shadows o'er my brain; and strange desire,
The tempest of a passion, raging over
My tranquil soul, its depths with light did cover.
Which past; and calm, and darkness, sweeter far,
Came—then I loved; but not a human lover!
For, when I rose from sleep, the Morning Star
Shone thro' the woodbine wreaths which round my casement were.

'Twas like an eye which seemed to smile on me.
I watched, till by the sun made pale, it sank
Under the billows of the heaving sea;
But from its beams deep love my spirit drank,
And to my brain the boundless world now shrank
Into one thought—one image—yes, for ever!
Even like the dayspring, poured on vapours dank,
The beams of that one Star did shoot and quiver
Thro' my benighted mind—and were extinguished never.

The day past thus: at night, methought in dream
A shape of speechless beauty did appear:
It stood like light on a careering stream
Of golden clouds which shook the atmosphere,
A winged youth; his radiant brow did wear
The Morning Star: a wild dissolving bliss
Over my frame he breathed, approaching near,
And bent his eyes of kindling tenderness
Near mine, and on my lips impressed a lingering kiss.

And said: A Spirit loves thee, mortal maiden;
How wilt thou prove thy worth? Then joy and sleep
Together fled; my soul was deeply laden,

And to the shore I went to muse and weep;
But, as I moved, over my heart did creep
A joy less soft, but more profound and strong
Than my sweet dream; and it forbade to keep
The path of the sea-shore: that Spirit's tongue
Seemed whispering in my heart, and bore my steps along.

How, to that vast and peopled city led,
Which was a field of holy warfare then,
I walked among the dying and the dead,
And shared in fearless deeds with evil men.
Calm as an angel in the dragon's den—
How I braved death for liberty and truth,
And spurned at peace, and power, and fame; and when
Those hopes had lost the glory of their youth,
How sadly I returned—might move the hearer's ruth:

Warm tears throng fast! the tale may not be said—
Know then, that, when this grief had been subdued,
I was not left, like others, cold and dead;
The Spirit whom I loved in solitude
Sustained his child: the tempest-shaken wood,
The waves, the fountains, and the hush of night—
These were his voice, and well I understood
His smile divine, when the calm sea was bright
With silent stars, and Heaven was breathless with delight.

In lonely glens, amid the roar of rivers,
When the dim nights were moonless, have I known
Joys which no tongue can tell; my pale lip quivers
When thought revisits them:—know thou alone,
That, after many wondrous years were flown,
I was awakened by a shriek of woe;
And over me a mystic robe was thrown,

By viewless hands, and a bright Star did glow
Before my steps—the Snake then met his mortal foe.

Thou fearest not then the Serpent on thy heart?
Fear it! she said, with brief and passionate cry,
And spake no more: that silence made me start—
I looked, and we were sailing pleasantly,
Swift as a cloud between the sea and sky,
Beneath the rising moon seen far away;
Mountains of ice, like sapphire, piled on high
Hemming the horizon round, in silence lay
On the still waters—these we did approach alway.

And swift and swifter grew the vessel's motion,
So that a dizzy trance fell on my brain—
Wild music woke me: we had past the ocean
Which girds the pole, Nature's remotest reign—
And we glode fast o'er a pellucid plain
Of waters, azure with the noon-tide day.
Æthereal mountains shone around—a Fane
Stood in the midst, girt by green isles which lay,
On the blue sunny deep, resplendent, far away.

It was a Temple, such as mortal hand
Has never built, nor ecstacy, nor dream,
Reared in the cities of inchanted land:
'Twas likest Heaven, ere yet day's purple stream
Ebbs o'er the western forest, while the gleam
Of the unrisen moon among the clouds
Is gathering—when with many a golden beam
The thronging constellations rush in crowds,
Paving with fire the sky and the marmoreal floods.

Like what may be conceived of this vast dome,
When from the depths which thought can seldom pierce
Genius beholds it rise, his native home,
Girt by the deserts of the Universe.
Yet, nor painting's light, or mightier verse,
Or sculpture's marble language, can invest
That shape to mortal sense—such glooms immerse
That incommunicable sight, and rest
Upon the labouring brain and overburthened breast.

Winding among the lawny islands fair,
Whose blosmy forests starred the shadowy deep,
The wingless boat paused where an ivory stair
Its fretwork in the crystal sea did steep,
Encircling that vast Fane's aerial heap:
We disembarked, and thro' a portal wide
We past—whose roof, of moonstone carved, did keep
A glimmering o'er the forms on every side,
Sculptures like life and thought; immoveable, deep-eyed.

We came to a vast hall, whose glorious roof
Was diamond, which had drunk the lightning's sheen
In darkness, and now poured it thro' the woof
Of spell-inwoven clouds, hung there to screen
Its blinding splendour—thro' such veil was seen
That work of subtlest power, divine and rare;
Orb above orb, with starry shapes between,
And horned moons, and meteors strange and fair,
On night-black columns poised—one hollow hemisphere!

Ten thousand columns in that quivering light
Distinct—between whose shafts wound far away
The long and labyrinthine aisles—more bright
With their own radiance than the Heaven of Day;

And, on the jasper walls around, there lay
Paintings, the poesy of mightiest thought,
Which did the Spirit's history display;
A tale of passionate change, divinely taught,
Which, in their winged dance, unconscious Genii wrought.

Beneath, there sate on many a sapphire throne
The Great, who had departed from mankind,
A mighty Senate;—some, whose white hair shone
Like mountain snow, mild, beautiful, and blind;
Some, female forms, whose gestures beamed with mind;
And ardent youths, and children bright and fair;
And some had lyres, whose strings were intertwined
With pale and clinging flames, which ever there
Waked faint yet thrilling sounds that pierced the crystal air.

One seat was vacant in the midst, a throne,
Reared on a pyramid like sculptured flame,
Distinct with circling steps which rested on
Their own deep fire—soon as the Woman came
Into that hall, she shrieked the Spirit's name,
And fell, and vanished slowly from the sight.
Darkness arose from her dissolving frame,
Which, gathering, filled that dome of woven light,
Blotting it's sphered stars with supernatural night.

Then, first, two glittering lights were seen to glide
In circles on the amethystine floor,
Small serpent eyes trailing from side to side,
Like meteors on a river's grassy shore,
They round each other rolled, dilating more
And more—then rose, commingling into one,
One clear and mighty planet hanging o'er
A cloud of deepest shadow, which was thrown
Athwart the glowing steps and the crystalline throne.

The cloud which rested on that cone of flame
Was cloven; beneath the planet sate a Form
Fairer than tongue can speak or thought may frame,
The radiance of whose limbs rose-like and warm
Flowed forth, and did with softest light inform
The shadowy dome, the sculptures, and the state
Of those assembled shapes—with clinging charm
Sinking upon their hearts and mine—He sate
Majestic, yet most mild—calm, yet compassionate.

Wonder and joy a passing faintness threw
Over my brow—a hand supported me,
Whose touch was magic strength: an eye of blue
Looked into mine, like moonlight, soothingly;
And a voice said—Thou must a listener be
This day—two mighty Spirits now return,
Like birds of calm, from the world's raging sea;
They pour fresh light from Hope's immortal urn;
A tale of human power—despair not—list and learn!

I looked, and lo! one stood forth eloquently;
His eyes were dark and deep, and the clear brow
Which shadowed them was like the morning sky,
The cloudless Heaven of Spring, when, in their flow
Thro' the bright air, the soft winds as they blow
Wake the green world—his gestures did obey
The oracular mind that made his features glow,
And, where his curved lips half-open lay,
Passion's divinest stream had made impetuous way.

Beneath the darkness of his outspread hair
He stood thus beautiful: but there was One
Who sate beside him like his shadow there,
And held his hand—far lovelier—she was known
To be thus fair, by the few lines alone

Which thro' her floating locks and gathered cloke,
Glances of soul-dissolving glory, shone:—
None else beheld her eyes—in him they woke
Memories which found a tongue, as thus he silence broke.

CANTO II.

The star-light smile of children, the sweet looks
Of women, the fair breast from which I fed,
The murmur of the unreposing brooks,
And the green light which, shifting overhead,
Some tangled bower of vines around me shed,
The shells on the sea-sand, and the wild flowers,
The lamp-light thro' the rafters cheerly spread,
And on the twining flax—in life's young hours
These sights and sounds did nurse my spirit's folded powers.

In Argolis, beside the echoing sea,
Such impulses within my mortal frame
Arose, and they were dear to memory,
Like tokens of the dead:—but others came
Soon, in another shape: the wondrous fame
Of the past world, the vital words and deeds
Of minds whom neither time nor change can tame,
Traditions dark and old, whence evil creeds
Start forth, and whose dim shade a stream of poison feeds.

I heard, as all have heard, the various story
Of human life, and wept unwilling tears.
Feeble historians of its shame and glory,

False disputants on all its hopes and fears,
Victims who worshiped ruin,—chroniclers
Of daily scorn, and slaves who loathed their state,
Yet flattering power had given its ministers
A throne of judgment in the grave:—'twas fate
That among such as these my youth should seek its mate.

The land in which I lived, by a fell bane
Was withered up. Tyrants dwelt side by side,
And stabled in our homes,—until the chain
Stifled the captive's cry, and to abide
That blasting curse men had no shame—all vied
In evil, slave and despot; fear with lust
Strange fellowship through mutual hate had tied,
Like two dark serpents tangled in the dust,
Which on the paths of men their mingling poison thrust.

Earth, our bright home, its mountains and its waters,
And the æthereal shapes which are suspended
Over its green expanse, and those fair daughters,
The clouds of Sun and Ocean, who have blended
The colours of the air since first extended
It cradled the young world, none wandered forth
To see or feel: a darkness had descended
On every heart: the light which shows its worth
Must among gentle thoughts and fearless take its birth.

This vital world, this home of happy spirits,
Was a dungeon to my blasted kind;
All that despair from murdered hope inherits
They sought, and, in their helpless misery blind,
A deeper prison and heavier chains did find,
And stronger tyrants:—a dark gulph before,
The realm of a stern Ruler, yawned; behind,

Terror and Time conflicting drove, and bore
On their tempestuous flood the shrieking wretch from shore.

Out of that Ocean's wrecks had Guilt and Woe
Framed a dark dwelling for their homeless thought,
And, starting at the ghosts which to and fro
Glide o'er its dim and gloomy strand, had brought
The worship thence which they each other taught.
Well might men loathe their life, well might they turn
Even to the ills again from which they sought
Such refuge after death!—well might they learn
To gaze on this fair world with hopeless unconcern!

For they all pined in bondage: body and soul,
Tyrant and slave, victim and torturer, bent
Before one Power, to which supreme controul
Over their will, by their own weakness lent,
Made all its many names omnipotent;
All symbols of things evil, all divine;
The hymns of blood or mockery, which rent
The air from all its fanes, did intertwine
Imposture's impious toils round each discordant shrine.

I heard, as all have heard, life's various story,
And in no careless heart transcribed the tale;
But, from the sneers of men who had grown hoary
In shame and scorn, from groans of crowds made pale
By famine, from a mother's desolate wail
O'er her polluted child, from innocent blood
Poured on the earth, and brows anxious and pale
With the heart's warfare, did I gather food
To feed my many thoughts,—a tameless multitude!

I wandered thro' the wrecks of days departed
Far by the desolated shore, when even

O'er the still sea and jagged islets darted
The light of moonrise; in the northern Heaven,
Among the clouds near the horizon driven,
The mountains lay beneath one planet pale;
Around me, broken tombs and columns riven
Looked vast in twilight, and the sorrowing gale
Waked in those ruins grey its everlasting wail!

I knew not who had framed these wonders then,
Nor had I heard the story of their deeds;
But dwellings of a race of mightier men,
And monuments of less ungentle creeds,
Tell their own tale to him who wisely heeds
The language which they speak; and now, to me
The moonlight making pale the blooming weeds,
The bright stars shining in the breathless sea,
Interpreted those scrolls of mortal mystery.

Such man has been, and such may yet become!
Aye, wiser, greater, gentler, even than they
Who on the fragments of yon shattered dome
Have stamped the sign of power—I felt the sway
Of the vast stream of ages bear away
My floating thoughts—my heart beat loud and fast—
Even as a storm let loose beneath the ray
Of the still moon, my spirit onward past
Beneath truth's steady beams upon its tumult cast.

It shall be thus no more! Too long, too long,
Sons of the glorious dead, have ye lain bound
In darkness and in ruin.—Hope is strong;
Justice and Truth their winged child have found—
Awake! arise! until the mighty sound

Of your career shall scatter in its gust
The thrones of the oppressor, and the ground
Hide the last altar's unregarded dust,
Whose Idol has so long betrayed your impious trust.

It must be so—I will arise and waken
The multitude, and, like a sulphurous hill
Which on a sudden from its snows has shaken
The swoon of ages, it shall burst and fill
The world with cleansing fire: it must, it will—
It may not be restrained!—and who shall stand
Amid the rocking earthquake steadfast still,
But Laon? on high Freedom's desert land
A tower whose marble walls the leagued storms withstand!

One summer night, in commune with the hope
Thus deeply fed, amid those ruins grey
I watched, beneath the dark sky's starry cope;
And ever from that hour upon me lay
The burthen of this hope, and night or day,
In vision or in dream, clove to my breast:
Among mankind, or when gone far away
To the lone shores and mountains, 'twas a guest
Which followed where I fled, and watched when I did rest.

These hopes found words thro' which my spirit sought
To weave a bondage of such sympathy
As might create some response to the thought
Which ruled me now—and, as the vapours lie
Bright in the out-spread morning's radiancy,
So were these thoughts invested with the light
Of language: and all bosoms made reply
On which its lustre streamed, whene'er it might
Thro' darkness wide and deep those tranced spirits smite.

Yes, many an eye with dizzy tears was dim,
And oft I thought to clasp my own heart's brother,
When I could feel the listener's senses swim,
And hear his breath its own swift gaspings smother
Even as my words evoked them—and another,
And yet another, I did fondly deem,
Felt that we all were sons of one great mother;
And the cold truth such sad reverse did seem,
As to awake in grief from some delightful dream.

Yes, oft beside the ruined labyrinth
Which skirts the hoary caves of the green deep,
Did Laon and his friend on one grey plinth,
Round whose worn base the wild waves hiss and leap,
Resting at eve, a lofty converse keep:
And that this friend was false may now be said
Calmly—that he like other men could weep
Tears which are lies, and could betray and spread
Snares for that guileless heart which for his own had bled.

Then, had no great aim recompensed my sorrow,
I must have sought dark respite from its stress
In dreamless rest, in sleep that sees no morrow—
For, to tread life's dismaying wilderness
Without one smile to cheer, one voice to bless,
Amid the snares and scoffs of human kind,
Is hard—but I betrayed it not, nor less
With love that scorned return sought to unbind
The interwoven clouds which make its wisdom blind.

With deathless minds, which leave where they have past
A path of light, my soul communion knew;
Till from that glorious intercourse at last,
As from a mine of magic store, I drew

Words which were weapons;—round my heart there grew
The adamantine armour of their power,
And from my fancy wings of golden hue
Sprang forth—yet not alone from wisdom's tower,
A minister of truth, these plumes young Laon bore.

An orphan with my parents lived, whose eyes
Were loadstars of delight, which drew me home
When I might wander forth; nor did I prize
Aught human thing beneath Heaven's mighty dome
Beyond this child: so when sad hours were come,
And baffled hope like ice still clung to me,
Since kin were cold, and friends had now become
Heartless and false, I turned from all, to be,
Cythna, the only source of tears and smiles to thee.

What wert thou then? A child most infantine,
Yet wandering far beyond that innocent age
In all but its sweet looks and mien divine;
Even then, methought, with the world's tyrant rage
A patient warfare thy young heart did wage,
When those soft eyes of scarcely conscious thought,
Some tale, or thine own fancies, would engage
To overflow with tears, or converse fraught
With passion, o'er their depths its fleeting light had wrought.

She moved upon this earth a shape of brightness,
A power, that from its objects scarcely drew
One impulse of her being—in her lightness
Most like some radiant cloud of morning dew,
Which wanders thro' the waste air's pathless blue,
To nourish some far desert: she did seem
Beside me, gathering beauty as she grew,

Like the bright shade of some immortal dream
Which walks, when tempest sleeps, the wave of life's dark stream.

As mine own shadow was this child to me,
A second self, far dearer and more fair;
Which clothed in undissolving radiancy
All those steep paths which languor and despair
Of human things had made so dark and bare;
But which I trod alone—nor, till bereft
Of friends, and overcome by lonely care,
Knew I what solace for that loss was left,
Though by a bitter wound my trusting heart was cleft.

Once she was dear, now she was all I had
To love in human life—this playmate sweet,
This child of twelve years old—so she was made
My sole associate, and her willing feet
Wandered with mine where earth and ocean meet,
Beyond the aerial mountains whose vast cells
The unreposing billows ever beat,
Thro' forests wide and old, and lawny dells,
Where boughs of incense droop over the emerald wells.

And warm and light I felt her clasping hand
When twined in mine: she followed where I went,
Thro' the lone paths of our immortal land.
It had no waste, but some memorial lent
Which strung me to my toil—some monument
Vital with mind: then Cythna by my side,
Until the bright and beaming day were spent,
Would rest, with looks entreating to abide,
Too earnest and too sweet ever to be denied.

And soon I could not have refused her—thus
For ever, day and night, we two were ne'er
Parted, but when brief sleep divided us:
And, when the pauses of the lulling air
Of noon beside the sea had made a lair
For her soothed senses, in my arms she slept,
And I kept watch over her slumbers there,
While, as the shifting visions o'er her swept,
Amid her innocent rest by turns she smil'd and wept.

And, in the murmur of her dreams, was heard
Sometimes the name of Laon:—suddenly
She would arise, and, like the secret bird
Whom sunset wakens, fill the shore and sky
With her sweet accents—a wild melody!
Hymns which my soul had woven to Freedom, strong
The source of passion, whence they rose to be
Triumphant strains, which, like a spirit's tongue,
To the inchanted waves that child of glory sung.

Her white arms lifted thro' the shadowy stream
Of her loose hair—oh, excellently great
Seemed to me then my purpose, the vast theme
Of those impassioned songs, when Cythna sate
Amid the calm which rapture doth create
After its tumult, her heart vibrating,
Her spirit o'er the ocean's floating state
From her deep eyes far wandering, on the wing
Of visions that were mine, beyond its utmost spring.

For, before Cythna loved it, had my song
Peopled with thoughts the boundless universe,
A mighty congregation, which were strong
Where'er they trod the darkness to disperse

The cloud of that unutterable curse
Which clings upon mankind:—all things became
Slaves to my holy and heroic verse,
Earth, sea, and sky, the planets, life, and fame,
And fate, or whate'er else binds the world's wondrous frame.

And this beloved child thus felt the sway
Of my conceptions, gathering like a cloud
The very wind on which it rolls away:
Her's too were all my thoughts, ere yet, endowed
With music and with light, their fountains flowed
In poesy; and her still and earnest face,
Palid with feelings which intensely glowed
Within, was turned on mine with speechless grace,
Watching the hopes which there her heart had learned to trace.

In me, communion with this purest being
Kindled intenser zeal, and made me wise
In knowledge, which in her's mine own mind seeing,
Left in the human world few mysteries:
How without fear of evil or disguise
Was Cythna!—what a spirit strong and mild,
Which death, or pain, or peril, could despise,
Yet melt in tenderness! what genius wild,
Yet mighty, was inclosed within one simple child!

New lore was this—old age with its grey hair,
And wrinkled legends of unworthy things,
And icy sneers, is nought: it cannot dare
To burst the chains which life for ever flings
On the entangled soul's aspiring wings,
So is it cold and cruel, and is made
The careless slave of that dark power which brings
Evil, like blight on man, who, still betrayed,
Laughs o'er the grave in which his living hopes are laid.

Nor are the strong and the severe to keep
The empire of the world: thus Cythna taught
Even in the visions of her eloquent sleep,
Unconscious of the power thro' which she wrought
The woof of such intelligible thought,
As from the tranquil strength which cradled lay
In her smile-peopled rest, my spirit sought
Why the deceiver and the slave has sway
O'er heralds so divine of truth's arising day.

Within that fairest form, the female mind
Untainted by the poison clouds which rest
On the dark world, a sacred home did find:
But else, from the wide earth's maternal breast,
Victorious Evil, which had dispossest
All native power, had those fair children torn,
And made them slaves to soothe his vile unrest,
And minister to lust its joys forlorn,
Till they had learned to breathe the atmosphere of scorn.

This misery was but coldly felt, 'till she
Became my only friend, who had indued
My purpose with a wider sympathy;
Thus, Cythna mourned with me the servitude
In which the half of humankind were mewed.
Victims of lust and hate, the slave of slaves,
She mourned that grace and power were thrown as food
To the hyena lust, who, among graves,
Over his loathed meal, laughing in agony, raves.

And I, still gazing on that glorious child,
Even as these thoughts flushed o'er her:—"Cythna sweet,
Well with the world art thou unreconciled;
Never will peace and human nature meet

Till free and equal man and woman greet
Domestic peace; and ere this power can make
In human hearts its calm and holy seat;
This slavery must be broken."—As I spake,
From Cythna's eyes a light of exultation brake.

She replied earnestly:—"It shall be mine,
This task, mine, Laon!—thou hast much to gain;
Nor wilt thou at poor Cythna's pride repine,
If she should lead a happy female train
To meet thee over the rejoicing plain,
When myriads at thy call shall throng around
The Golden City."—Then the child did strain
My arm upon her tremulous heart, and wound
Her own about my neck, till some reply she found.

I smiled, and spake not.—"Wherefore dost thou smile
At what I say? Laon, I am not weak,
And, though my cheek might become pale the while,
With thee, if thou desirest, will I seek
Through their array of banded slaves to wreak
Ruin upon the tyrants. I had thought
It was more hard to turn my unpractised cheek
To scorn and shame, and this beloved spot
And thee, O dearest friend, to leave and murmur not.

"Whence came I what I am? Thou, Laon, knowest
How a young child should thus undaunted be;
Methinks, it is a power which thou bestowest,
Through which I seek, by most resembling thee,
So to become most good, and great, and free;
Yet far beyond this Ocean's utmost roar
In towers and huts are many like to me,
Who, could they see thine eyes, or feel such lore
As I have learnt from them, like me would fear no more.

"Think'st thou that I shall speak unskilfully,
And none will heed me? I remember now,
How once a slave, in tortures doomed to die,
Was saved, because in accents sweet and low
He sang a song his Judge loved long ago,
As he was led to death.—All shall relent
Who hear me—tears, as mine have flowed, shall flow,
Hearts beat as mine now beats, with such intent
As renovates the world,—a will omnipotent!

"Yes, I will tread Pride's golden palaces,
Thro' Penury's roofless huts and squalid cells
Will I descend, where'er in abjectness
Woman with some vile slave her tyrant dwells,
There with the music of thine own sweet spells
Will disinchant the captives, and will pour
For the despairing, from the crystal wells
Of thy deep spirit, reason's mighty lore,
And power shall then abound, and hope arise once more.

"Can man be free if woman be a slave?
Chain one who lives and breathes this boundless air
To the corruption of a closed grave!
Can they whose mates are beasts, condemned to bear
Scorn, heavier far than toil or anguish, dare
To trample their oppressors? In their home
Among their babes, thou knowest a curse would wear
The shape of woman—hoary crime would come
Behind, and fraud rebuild religion's tottering dome.

"I am a child:—I would not yet depart.
When I go forth alone, bearing the lamp
Aloft which thou hast kindled in my heart,
Millions of slaves from many a dungeon damp

Shall leap in joy, as the benumbing cramp
Of ages leaves their limbs—no ill may harm
Thy Cythna ever—truth its radiant stamp
Has fixed, as an invulnerable charm
Upon her children's brow, dark falsehood to disarm.

"Wait yet awhile for the appointed day—
Thou wilt depart, and I with tears shall stand
Watching thy dim sail skirt the ocean grey;
Amid the dwellers of this lonely land
I shall remain alone—and thy command
Shall then dissolve the world's unquiet trance,
And, multitudinous as the desert sand
Borne on the storm, its millions shall advance,
Thronging round thee, the light of their deliverance.

"Then, like the forests of some pathless mountain,
Which from remotest glens two warring winds
Involve in fire, which not the loosened fountain
Of broadest floods might quench, shall all the kinds
Of evil catch from our uniting minds
The spark which must consume them.—Cythna then
Will have cast off the impotence that binds
Her childhood now, and thro' the paths of men
Will pass, as the charmed bird that haunts the serpent's den.

"We part!—O Laon, I must dare, nor tremble
To meet those looks no more!—O heavy stroke!
Sweet brother of my soul; can I dissemble
The agony of this thought?"—As thus she spoke
The gathered sobs her quivering accents broke,
And in my arms she hid her beating breast.
I remained still for tears—sudden she woke

As one awakes from sleep, and wildly prest
My bosom, her whole frame impetuously possest.

"We part to meet again—but yon blue waste,
Yon desert wide and deep holds no recess
Within whose happy silence, thus embraced,
We might survive all ills in one caress:
Nor doth the grave—I fear 'tis passionless—
Nor yon cold vacant Heaven:—we meet again
Within the minds of men, whose lips shall bless
Our memory, and whose hopes its light retain
When these dissevered bones are trodden in the plain."

I could not speak, tho' she had ceased, for now
The fountains of her feeling, swift and deep,
Seemed to suspend the tumult of their flow;
So we arose, and by the star-light steep
Went homeward—neither did we speak nor weep,
But pale, were calm.—With passion thus subdued,
Like evening shades that o'er the mountains creep,
We moved towards our home; where, in this mood,
Each from the other sought refuge in solitude.

CANTO III.

What thoughts had sway o'er Cythna's lonely slumber
That night I know not; but my own did seem
As if they might ten thousand years outnumber
Of waking life, the visions of a dream,
Which hid in one dim gulph the troubled stream

Of mind; a boundless chaos wild and vast,
Whose limits yet were never memory's theme:
And I lay struggling as its whirlwinds past,
Sometimes for rapture sick, sometimes for pain aghast.

Two hours, whose mighty circle did embrace
More time than might make grey the infant world,
Rolled thus, a weary and tumultuous space:
When the third came, like mist on breezes curled,
From my dim sleep a shadow was unfurled:
Methought, upon the threshold of a cave
I sate with Cythna; drooping briony, pearled
With dew from the wild streamlet's shattered wave,
Hung, where we sate to taste the joys which Nature gave.

We lived a day as we were wont to live,
But Nature had a robe of glory on,
And the bright air o'er every shape did weave
Intenser hues, so that the herbless stone,
The leafless bough among the leaves alone,
Had being clearer than its own could be,
And Cythna's pure and radiant self was shown
In this strange vision, so divine to me,
That, if I loved before, now love was agony.

Morn fled, noon came, evening, then night descended,
And we prolonged calm talk beneath the sphere
Of the calm moon—when, suddenly was blended
With our repose a nameless sense of fear;
And from the cave behind I seemed to hear
Sounds gathering upwards!—accents incomplete,
And stifled shrieks,—and now, more near and near,
A tumult and a rush of thronging feet
The cavern's secret depths beneath the earth did beat.

The scene was changed, and away, away, away!
Thro' the air and over the sea we sped,
And Cythna in my sheltering bosom lay,
And the winds bore me;—thro' the darkness spread
Around, the gaping earth then vomited
Legions of foul and ghastly shapes, which hung
Upon my flight; and ever as we fled
They plucked at Cythna—soon to me then clung
A sense of actual things those monstrous dreams among.

And I lay struggling in the impotence
Of sleep, while outward life had burst its bound,
Tho', still deluded, strove the tortured sense
To its dire wanderings to adapt the sound
Which in the light of morn was poured around
Our dwelling—breathless, pale, and unaware
I rose, and all the cottage crowded found
With armed men, whose glittering swords were bare,
And whose degraded limbs the tyrant's garb did wear.

And ere with rapid lips and gathered brow
I could demand the cause—a feeble shriek—
It was a feeble shriek, faint, far, and low,
Arrested me—my mien grew calm and meek,
And, grasping a small knife, I went to seek
That voice among the crowd—'twas Cythna's cry!
Beneath most calm resolve did agony wreak
Its whirlwind rage:—so I past quietly
Till I beheld, were bound, that dearest child did lie.

I started to behold her, for delight
And exultation, and a joyance free,
Solemn, serene, and lofty, filled the light

Of the calm smile with which she looked on me:
So that I feared some brainless ecstacy,
Wrought from that bitter woe, had wildered her—
"Farewell! farewell!" she said, as I drew nigh.
"At first my peace was marred by this strange stir,
Now I am calm as truth—its chosen minister.

"Look not so, Laon—say farewell in hope:
These bloody men are but the slaves who bear
Their mistress to her task—it was my scope
The slavery where they drag me now to share,
And among captives willing chains to wear
Awhile—the rest thou knowest—return, dear friend!
Let our first triumph trample the despair
Which would ensnare us now, for in the end
In victory or in death our hopes and fears must blend."

These words had fallen on my unheeding ear,
Whilst I had watched the motions of the crew
Which seeming careless glance; not many were
Around her, for their comrades just withdrew
To guard some other victim—so I drew
My knife, and with one impulse suddenly,
All unaware, three of their number slew,
And grasped a fourth by the throat, and with loud cry
My countrymen invoked to death or liberty!

What followed then I know not—for a stroke
On my raised arm and naked head came down,
Filling my eyes with blood—when I awoke,
I felt that they had bound me in my swoon,
And up a rock which overhangs the town
By the steep path were bearing me: below,
The plain was filled with slaughter,—overthrown

The vineyards and the harvests, and the glow
Of blazing roofs shone far o'er the white Ocean's flow.

Upon that rock a mighty column stood,
Whose capital seemed sculptured in the sky,
Which to the wanderers o'er the solitude
Of distant seas, from ages long gone by,
Had many a landmark; o'er its height to fly
Scarcely the cloud, the vulture, or the blast,
Has power—and when the shades of evening lie
On Earth and Ocean, its carv'd summits cast
The sunken day-light far thro' the aërial waste.

They bore me to a cavern in the hill
Beneath that column, and unbound me there:
And one did strip me stark; and one did fill
A vessel from the putrid pool; one bare
A lighted torch, and four with friendless care
Guided my steps the cavern-paths along,
Then up a steep and dark and narrow stair
We wound, until the torches' fiery tongue
Amid the gushing day beamless and palid hung.

They raised me to the platform of the pile,
That column's dizzy height:—the grate of brass,
Thro' which they thrust me, open stood the while,
As to its ponderous and suspended mass,
With chains which eat into the flesh, alas!
With brazen links, my naked limbs they bound:
The grate, as they departed to repass,
With horrid clangour fell, and the far sound
Of their retiring steps in the dense gloom was drowned.

The noon was calm and bright:—around that column
The overhanging sky and circling sea
Spread forth in silentness profound and solemn
The darkness of brief frenzy cast on me,
So that I knew not my own misery:
The islands and the mountains in the day
Like clouds reposed afar; and I could see
The town among the woods below that lay,
And the dark rocks which bound the bright and glassy bay.

It was so calm, that scarce the feathery weed
Sown by some eagle on the topmost stone
Swayed in the air:—so bright, that noon did breed
No shadow in the sky beside mine own—
Mine, and the shadow of my chain alone.
Below, the smoke of roofs involved in flame
Rested like night; all else was clearly shown
In the broad glare, yet sound to me none came,
But of the living blood that ran within my frame.

The peace of madness fled, and ah, too soon!
A ship was lying on the sunny main;
Its sails were flagging in the breathless noon—
Its shadow lay beyond—that sight again
Waked, with its presence, in my tranced brain
The strings of a known sorrow, keen and cold:
I knew that ship bore Cythna o'er the plain
Of waters, to her blighting slavery sold,
And watched it with such thoughts as must remain untold.

I watched until the shades of evening wrapt
Earth like an exhalation—then the bark
Moved, for that calm was by the sunset snapt.
It moved a speck upon the Ocean dark:

Soon the wan stars came forth, and I could mark
Its path no more!—I sought to close mine eyes,
But, like the balls, their lids were stiff and stark;
I would have risen, but, ere that I could rise,
My parched skin was split with piercing agonies.

I gnawed my brazen chain, and sought to sever
Its adamantine links, that I might die:
O Liberty! forgive the base endeavour,
Forgive me, if, reserved for victory,
The Champion of thy faith e'er sought to fly.—
That starry night, with its clear silence, sent
Tameless resolve which laughed at misery
Into my soul—linked remembrance lent
To that such power, to me such a severe content.

To breathe, to be, to hope, or to despair
And die, I questioned not; nor, though the Sun
Its shafts of agony kindling thro' the air
Moved over me, nor though in evening dun,
Or when the stars their visible courses run,
Or morning, the wide universe was spread
In dreary calmness round me, did I shun
Its presence, nor seek refuge with the dead
From one faint hope whose flower a dropping poison shed.

Two days thus past—I neither raved nor died—
Thirst raged within me, like a scorpion's nest
Built in mine entrails: I had spurned aside
The water-vessel, while despair possest
My thoughts, and now no drop remained! The uprest
Of the third sun brought hunger—but the crust,
Which had been left, was to my craving breast

Fuel, not food. I chewed the bitter dust,
And bit my bloodless arm, and licked the brazen rust.

My brain began to fail when the fourth morn
Burst o'er the golden isles—a fearful sleep,
Which, through the caverns dreary and forlorn
Of the riven soul, sent its foul dreams to sweep
With whirlwind swiftness—a fall far and deep,—
A gulph, a void, a sense of senselessness—
These things dwelt in me, even as shadows keep
Their watch in some dim charnel's loneliness,
A shoreless sea, a sky sunless and planetless!

The forms which peopled this terrific trance
I well remember—like a quire of devils,
Around me they involved a giddy dance;
Legions seemed gathering from the misty levels
Of Ocean, to supply those ceaseless revels,
Foul ceaseless shadows:—thought could not divide
The actual world from these entangling evils,
Which so bemocked themselves, that I descried
All shapes like mine own self, hideously multiplied.

The sense of day and night, of false and true,
Was dead within me. Yet two visions burst
That darkness—one, as since that hour I knew,
Was not a phantom of the realms accurst,
Where then my spirit dwelt—but of the first
I know not yet, was it a dream or no.
But both, tho' not distincter, were immersed
In hues which, when thro' memory's waste they flow,
Make their divided streams more bright and rapid now.

Methought that gate was lifted, and the seven,
Who brought me thither, four stiff corpses bare,

And from the frieze to the four winds of Heaven
Hung them on high by the entangled hair:
Swarthy were three—the fourth was very fair:
As they retired, the golden moon upsprung,
And eagerly, out in the giddy air,
Leaning that I might eat, I stretched and clung
Over the shapeless depth in which those corpses hung.

A woman's shape, now lank and cold and blue,
The dwelling of the many-coloured worm
Hung there, the white and hollow cheek I drew
To my dry lips—what radiance did inform
Those horny eyes? whose was that withered form?
Alas, alas! it seemed that Cythna's ghost
Laughed in those looks, and that the flesh was warm
Within my teeth!—a whirlwind keen as frost
Then in its sinking gulphs my sickening spirit tost.

Then seemed it that a tameless hurricane
Arose, and bore me in its dark career
Beyond the sun, beyond the stars that wane
On the verge of formless space—it languished there,
And, dying, left a silence lone and drear,
More horrible than famine:—in the deep
The shape of an old man did then appear,
Stately and beautiful; that dreadful sleep
His heavenly smiles dispersed, and I could wake and weep.

And, when the blinding tears had fallen, I saw
That column, and those corpses, and the moon,
And felt the poisonous tooth of hunger gnaw
My vitals, I rejoiced, as if the boon
Of senseless death would be accorded soon;—

When from that stony gloom a voice arose,
Solemn and sweet as when low winds attune
The midnight pines; the grate did then unclose,
And on that reverend form the moonlight did repose.

He struck my chains, and gently spake and smiled:
As they were loosened by that Hermit old,
Mine eyes were of their madness half beguiled,
To answer those kind looks.—He did infold
His giant arms around me, to uphold
My wretched frame; my scorched limbs he wound
In linen moist and balmy, and as cold
As dew to drooping leaves;—the chain, with sound
Like earthquake, thro' the chasm of that steep stair did bound

As, lifting me, it fell!—What next I heard,
Were billows leaping on the harbour bar,
And the shrill sea-wind, whose breath idly stirred
My hair;—I looked abroad, and saw a star
Shining beside a sail, and distant far
That mountain and its column, the known mark
Of those who in the wide deep wandering are,
So that I feared some Spirit, fell and dark,
In trance had lain me thus within a fiendish bark.

For now, indeed, over the salt sea billow
I sailed: yet dared not look upon the shape
Of him who ruled the helm, altho' the pillow
For my light head was hollowed in his lap,
And my bare limbs his mantle did enwrap,
Fearing it was a fiend: at last he bent
O'er me his aged face; as if to snap
Those dreadful thoughts the gentle grandsire bent,
And to my inmost soul his soothing looks he sent.

A soft and healing potion to my lips
At intervals he raised—now looked on high,
To mark if yet the starry giant dips
His zone in the dim sea—now cheeringly,
Though he said little, did he speak to me.
"It is a friend beside thee—take good cheer,
Poor victim, thou art now at liberty!"
I joyed as those a human tone to hear
Who in cells deep and lone have languished many a year.

A dim and feeble joy, whose glimpses oft
Were quenched in a relapse of wildering dreams,
Yet still methought we sailed, until aloft
The stars of night grew palid, and the beams
Of morn descended on the ocean streams,
And still that aged man, so grand and mild,
Tended me, even as some sick mother seems
To hang in hope over a dying child,
Till in the azure East darkness again was piled.

And then the night-wind, steaming from the shore,
Sent odours dying sweet across the sea,
And the swift boat the little waves which bore,
Were cut by its keen keel, tho' slantingly;
Soon I could hear the leaves sigh, and could see
The myrtle blossoms starring the dim grove,
As past the pebbly beach the boat did flee
On sidelong wing into a silent cove,
Where ebon pines a shade under the starlight wove.

CANTO IV.

THE old man took the oars, and soon the bark
Smote on the beach beside a tower of stone;
It was a crumbling heap, whose portal dark
With blooming ivy trails was overgrown;
Upon whose floor the spangling sands were strown,
And rarest sea-shells, which the eternal flood,
Slave to the mother of the months, had thrown
Within the walls of that grey tower, which stood
A changeling of man's art, nursed amid Nature's brood.

When the old man his boat had anchored,
He wound me in his arms with tender care,
And very few but kindly words he said,
And bore me thro' the tower adown a stair,
Whose smooth descent some ceaseless step to wear
For many a year had fallen.—We came at last
To a small chamber, which with mosses rare
Was tapestried, where me his soft hands placed
Upon a couch of grass and oak-leaves interlaced.

The moon was darting through the lattices
Its yellow light, warm as the beams of day—
So warm, that to admit the dewy breeze,
The old man opened them; the moonlight lay
Upon a lake whose waters wove their play
Even to the threshold of that lonely home:
Within was seen, in the dim wavering ray,
The antique sculptured roof, and many a tome
Whose lore had made that sage all that he had become.

The rock-built barrier of the sea was past,—
And I was on the margin of a lake,
A lonely lake, amid the forests vast
And snowy mountains;—did my spirit wake
From sleep, as many-coloured as the snake
That girds eternity? in life and truth,
Might not my heart its cravings ever slake?
Was Cythna then a dream, and all my youth,
And all its hopes and fears, and all its joy and ruth?

Thus madness came again,—a milder madness,
Which darkened nought but time's unquiet flow
With supernatural shades of clinging sadness;
That gentle Hermit, in my helpless woe,
By my sick couch was busy to and fro,
Like a strong spirit ministrant of good:
When I was healed, he led me forth to show
The wonders of his sylvan solitude,
And we together sate by that isle-fretted flood.

He knew his soothing words to weave with skill
From all my madness told; like mine own heart,
Of Cythna would he question me, until
That thrilling name had ceased to make me start,
From his familiar lips—it was not art,
Of wisdom and of justice when he spoke—
When mid soft looks of pity, there would dart
A glance as keen as is the lightning's stroke
When it doth rive the knots of some ancestral oak.

Thus slowly from my brain the darkness rolled,
My thoughts their due array did re-assume
Thro' the inchantments of that Hermit old;
Then I bethought me of the glorious doom

Of those who sternly struggle to relume
The lamp of Hope o'er man's bewildered lot,
And, sitting by the waters, in the gloom
Of eve, to that friend's heart I told my thought—
That heart which had grown old, but had corrupted not.

That hoary man had spent his livelong age
In converse with the dead, who leave the stamp
Of ever-burning thoughts on many a page,
When they are gone into the senseless damp
Of graves;—his spirit thus became a lamp
Of splendour, like to those on which it fed.
Thro' peopled haunts, the city, and the camp,
Deep thirst for knowledge had his footsteps led,
And all the ways of men among mankind he read.

But custom maketh blind and obdurate
The loftiest hearts:—he had beheld the woe
In which mankind was bound, but deemed that fate
Which made them abject would perserve them so;
And in such faith, some steadfast joy to know,
He sought this cell: but, when fame went abroad
That one in Argolis did undergo
Torture for liberty, and that the crowd
High truths from gifted lips had heard and understood,

And that the multitude was gathering wide,
His spirit leaped within his aged frame;
In lonely peace he could no more abide,
But to the land on which the victor's flame
Had fed, my native land, the Hermit came:
Each heart was there a shield, and every tongue
Was as a sword of truth—young Laon's name
Rallied their secret hopes, tho' tyrants sung
Hymns of triumphant joy our scattered tribes among.

He came to the lone column on the rock,
And with his sweet and mighty eloquence
The hearts of those who watched it did unlock,
And made them melt in tears of penitence.
They gave him entrance free to bear me thence.
"Since this," (the old man said,) seven years are spent,
While slowly truth on thy benighted sense
Has crept; the hope which wildered it has lent
Meanwhile to me the power of a sublime intent.

"Yes, from the records of my youthful state,
And from the lore of bards and sages old,
From whatsoe'er my wakened thoughts create
Out of the hopes of thine aspirings bold,
Have I collected language to unfold
Truth to my countrymen; from shore to shore
Doctrines of human power my words have told;
They have been heard, and men aspire to more
Than they have ever gained or ever lost of yore.

"In secret chambers parents read, and weep,
My writings to their babes, no longer blind;
And young men gather when their tyrants sleep,
And vows of faith each to the other bind;
And marriageable maidens, who have pined
With love till life seemed melting thro' their look,
A warmer zeal, a nobler hope, now find,
And every bosom thus is rapt and shook,
Like autumn's myriad leaves in one swoln mountain brook

"The tyrants of the Golden City tremble
At voices which are heard about the streets;
The ministers of fraud can scarce dissemble
The lies of their own heart; but when one meets

Another at the shrine, he inly weets,
Thro' he says nothing, that the truth is known;
Murderers are pale upon the judgment seats,
And gold grows vile even to the wealthy crone,
And laughter fills the Fane, and curses shake the Throne.

"Kind thoughts, and mighty hopes, and gentle deeds,
Abound, for fearless love, and the pure law
Of mild equality and peace, succeeds
To faiths which long have held the world in awe,
Bloody, and false, and cold:—as whirlpools draw
All wrecks of Ocean to their chasm, the sway
Of thy strong genius, Laon, which foresaw
This hope, compels all spirits to obey,
Which round thy secret strength now throng in wide array.

"For I have been thy passive instrument"—
(As thus the old man spake, his countenance
Gleamed on me like a spirit's)—"thou hast lent
To me, to all, the power to advance
Towards this unforeseen deliverance
From our ancestral chains—aye, thou didst rear
That lamp of hope on high, which time, nor chance,
Nor change, may not extinguish, and my share
Of good was o'er the world its gathered beams to bear.

"But I, alas! am both unknown and old,
And, though the woof of wisdom I know well
To dye in hues of language, I am cold
In seeming, and the hopes which inly dwell
My manners note that I did long repel;
But Laon's name to the tumultuous throng
Were like the star whose beams the waves compel

And tempests, and his soul-subduing tongue
Were as a lance to quell the mailed crest of wrong.

"Perchance blood need not flow, if thou at length
Wouldst rise; perchance the very slaves would spare
Their brethren and themselves; great is the strength
Of words—for lately did a maiden fair,
Who from her childhood has been taught to bear
The tyrant's heaviest yoke, arise, and make
Her sex the law of truth and freedom hear;
And with these quiet words—"for thine own sake
I prithee spare me,"—did with ruth so take

"All hearts, that even the torturer, who had bound
Her meek calm frame, ere it was yet impaled,
Loosened her weeping then; nor could be found
One human hand to harm her—unassailed
Therefore she walks thro' the great City, veiled
In virtue's adamantine eloquence,
'Gainst scorn, and death, and pain, thus trebly mailed,
And, blending in the smiles of that defence
The Serpent and the Dove, Wisdom and Innocence,

"The wild-eyed women throng around her path:
From their luxurious dungeons, from the dust
Of meaner thralls, from the oppressor's wrath,
Or the caresses of his sated lust,
They congregate:—in her they put their trust;
The tyrants send their armed slaves to quell
Her power;—they, even like a thunder gust
Caught by some forest, bend beneath the spell
Of that young maiden's speech, and to their chiefs rebel.

"Thus she doth equal laws and justice teach
To woman, outraged and polluted long;

Gathering the sweetest fruit in human reach
For those fair hands now free, while armed wrong
Trembles before her look, tho' it be strong;
Thousands thus dwell beside her, virgins bright,
And matrons with their babes, a stately throng!
Lovers renew the vows which they did plight
In early faith, and hearts long parted now unite.

"And homeless orphans find a home near her,
And those poor victims of the proud, no less
Fair wrecks, on whom the smiling world with stir
Thrusts the redemption of its wickedness:—
In squalid huts, and in its palaces,
Sits Lust alone, while o'er the land is borne
Her voice, whose awful sweetness doth repress
All evil, and her foes relenting turn,
And cast the vote of love in hope's abandoned urn.

"So in the populous City, a young maiden
Has baffled havock of the prey which he
Mark as his own, whene'er with chains o'erladen
Men make them arms to hurl down tyranny,
False arbiter between the bound and free;
And o'er the land, in hamlets and in towns,
The multitudes collect tumultuously,
And throng in arms; but tyranny disowns
Their claim, and gathers strength around its trembling thrones.

"Blood soon, altho' unwillingly to shed
The free cannot forbear—the Queen of Slaves,
The hood-winked Angel of the blind and dead,
Custom, with iron mace points to the graves
Where her own standard desolately waves

Over the dust of Prophets and of Kings.
Many yet stand in her array—'she paves
Her path with human hearts,' and o'er it flings
The wildering gloom of her immeasurable wings.

"There is a plain beneath the City's wall,
Bounded by misty mountains, wide and vast;
Millions there lift at Freedom's thrilling call
Ten thousand standards wide; they load the blast
Which bears one sound of many voices past,
And startles on his throne their sceptered foe:
He sits amid his idle pomp aghast,
And that his power hath past away doth know—
Why pause the victor swords to seal his overthrow?

"The tyrant's guards resistance yet maintain:
Fearless, and fierce, and hard, as beasts of blood,
They stand a speck amid the peopled plain;
Carnage and ruin have been made their food
From infancy—ill has become their good,
And for its hateful sake their will has wove
The chains which eat their hearts—the multitude
Surrounding them, with words of human love,
Seek from their own decay their stubborn minds to move.

"Over the land is felt a sudden pause,
As night and day those ruthless bands around
The watch of love is kept:—a trance which awes
The thoughts of men with hope—as when the sound
Of whirlwind, whose fierce blasts the waves and clouds confound,
Dies suddenly, the mariner in fear
Feels silence sink upon his heart—thus bound,
The conquerors pause, and oh! may freemen ne'er
Clasp the relentless knees of Dread the murderer!

"If blood be shed, 'tis but a change and choice
Of bonds,—from slavery to cowardice
A wretched fall!—uplift thy charmed voice,
Pour on those evil men the love that lies
Hovering within those spirit-soothing eyes—
Arise, my friend, farewell!"—As thus h spake,
From the green earth lightly I did arise
As one out of dim dreams that doth awake,
And looked upon the depth of that reposing lake.

I saw my countenance reflected there;—
And then my youth fell on me like a wind
Descending on still waters—my thin hair
Was prematurely grey, my face was lined
With channels, such as suffering leaves behind,
Not age; my brow was pale, but in my cheek
And lips a flush of gnawing fire did find
Their food and dwelling; tho' mine eyes might speak
A subtle mind and strong within a frame thus weak;

And, tho' their lustre now was spent and faded,
Yet in my hollowed looks and withered mien
The likeness of a shape for which was braided
The brightest woof of genius, still was seen—
One who, methought, had gone from the world's scene,
And left it vacant—'twas her lover's face—
It might resemble her—it once had been
The mirror of her thoughts, and still the grace
Which her mind's shadow cast left there a lingering trace.

What then was I? She slumbered with the dead.
Glory and joy and peace had come and gone.
Doth the cloud perish, when the beams are fled
Which steeped its skirts in gold? or, dark and lone,

Doth it not thro' the paths of night unknown,
On outspread wings of its own wind upborne
Pour rain upon the earth? the stars are shewn,
When the cold moon sharpens her silver horn
Under the sea, and make the wide night not forlorn.

Strengthened in heart, yet sad, that aged man
I left, with interchange of looks and tears,
And lingering speech, and to the camp began
My way. O'er many a mountain chain which rears
Its hundred crests aloft, my spirit bears
My frame; o'er many a dale and many a moor,
And gaily now me seems serene earth wears
The blosmy spring's star-bright investiture,
A vision which ought sad from sadness might allure.

My powers revived within me, and I went
As one whom winds waft o'er the bending grass,
Thro' many a vale of that broad continent.
At night when I reposed, fair dreams did pass
Before my pillow;—my own Cythna was
Not like a child of death, among them ever;
When I arose from rest, a woeful mass
That gentlest sleep seemed from my life to sever,
As if the light of youth were not withdrawn for ever.

Aye as I went, that maiden, who had reared
The torch of Truth afar, of whose high deeds
The Hermit in his pilgrimage had heard,
Haunted my thoughts.—Ah, Hope its sickness feeds
With whatsoe'er it finds, or flowers or weeds!
Could she be Cythna?—Was that corpse a shade
Such as self-torturing thought from madness breeds?

Why was this hope not torture? yet it made
A light around my steps which would not ever fade.

CANTO V.

Over the utmost hill at length I sped,
A snowy steep:—the moon was hanging low
Over the Asian mountains, and outspread
The plain, the City, and the Camp, below,
Skirted the midnight Ocean's glimmering flow,
The City's moon-lit spires and myriad lamps,
Like stars in a sublunar sky did glow,
And fires blazed far amid the scattered camps,
Like springs of flame, which burst where'er swift Earthquake stamps.

All slept but those in watchful arms who stood,
And those who sate tending the beacon's light,
And the few sounds from that vast multitude
Made silence more profound—Oh, what a might
Of human thought was cradled in that night!
How many hearts, impenetrably veiled,
Beat underneath its shade! what secret fight
Evil and good, in woven passions mailed,
Waged thro' that silent throng—a war that never failed!

And now the Power of Good held victory,
So, thro' the labyrinth of many a tent,
Among the silent millions who did lie

In innocent sleep, exultingly I went;
The moon had left Heaven desert now, but lent
From eastern morn the first faint lustre showed
An armed youth—over his spear he bent
His downward face.—"A friend!" I cried aloud,
And quickly common hopes made freemen understood.

I sate beside him while the morning beam
Crept slowly over Heaven, and talked with him
Of those immortal hopes, a glorious theme!
Which led us forth, until the stars grew dim:
And all the while, methought, his voice did swim,
As if it drowned in remembrance were
Of thoughts which make the moist eyes overbrim:
At last, when daylight 'gan to fill the air,
He looked on me, and cried in wonder—"Thou art here!"

Then, suddenly, I knew it was the youth
In whom its earliest hopes my spirit found;
But envious tongues had stained his spotless truth,
And thoughtless pride his love in silence bound,
And shame and sorrow mine in toils had wound,
Whilst he was innocent, and I deluded.
The truth now came upon me; on the ground
Tears of repenting joy, which fast intruded,
Fell fast, and o'er its peace our mingling spirits brooded.

Thus, while with rapid lips and earnest eyes
We talked, a sound of sweeping conflict spread,
As from the earth did suddenly arise;
From every tent, rouzed by that clamour dread,
Our bands outsprung and seized their arms—we sped
Towards the sound: our tribes were gathering far,
Those sanguine slaves amid ten thousand dead

Stabbed in their sleep, trampled in treacherous war,
The gentle hearts whose power their lives had sought to
spare.

Like rabid snakes, that sting some gentle child
Who brings them food, when winter false and fair
Allures them forth with its cold smiles, so wild
They rage among the camp;—they overbear
The patriot hosts—confusion, then despair
Descends like night—when "Laon!" one did cry:
Like a bright ghost from Heaven that shout did scare
The slaves, and, widening thro' the vaulted sky,
Seemed sent from Earth to Heaven in sign of victory.

In sudden panic those false murderers fled,
Like insect tribes before the northern gale:
But, swifter still, our hosts encompassed
Their shattered ranks, and in a craggy vale,
Where even their fierce despair might nought avail,
Hemmed them around!—and then revenge and fear
Made the high virtue of the patriots fail:
One pointed on his foe the mortal spear—
I rushed before its point, and cried, "Forbear, forbear!"

The spear transfixed my arm that was uplifted
In swift expostulation, and the blood
Gushed round its point: I smiled, and—"Oh! thou gifted
With eloquence which shall not be withstood,
Flow thus!"—I cried in joy, "thou vital flood,
Until my heart be dry, ere thus the cause
For which thou wert aught worthy be subdued—
Ah, ye are pale,—ye weep,—your passions pause,—
'Tis well! ye feel the truth of love's benignant laws.

"Soldiers, our brethren and our friends are slain.
Ye murdered them I think as they did sleep!
Alas, what have ye done? The slightest pain
Which ye might suffer, there were eyes to weep;
But ye have quenched them—there were smiles to steep
Your hearts in balm, but they are lost in woe;
And those whom love did set his watch to keep
Around your tents truth's freedom to bestow,
Ye stabbed as they did sleep—but they forgive ye now.

"Oh wherefore should ill ever flow from ill,
And pain still keener pain for ever breed?
We all are brethren—even the slaves who kill
For hire are men; and, to avenge misdeed
On the misdoer, doth but Misery feed
With her own broken heart! O Earth, O Heaven!
And thou, dread Nature, which to every deed
And all that lives, or is to be, hath given,
Even as to thee have these done ill, and are forgiven.

"Join then your hands and hearts, and let the past
Be as a grave which gives not up its dead
To evil thoughts."—A film then overcast
My sense with dimness, for the wound, which bled
Freshly, swift shadows o'er mine eyes had shed.
When I awoke, I lay mid friends and foes,
And earnest countenances on me shed
The light of questioning looks, whilst one did close
My wound with balmiest herbs, and soothed me to repose;

And one, whose spear had pierced me, leaned beside
With quivering lips and humid eyes:—and all
Seemed like some brothers on a journey wide

Gone forth, whom now strange meeting did befall
In a strange land, round one whom they might call
Their friend, their chief, their father, for assay
Of peril, which had saved them from the thrall
Of death, now suffering. Thus the vast array
Of those fraternal bands were reconciled that day.

Lifting the thunder of their acclamation
Towards the city, then the multitude,
And I among them, went in joy—a nation
Made free by love;—a mighty brotherhood
Linked by a jealous interchange of good;
A glorious pageant, more magnificent
Than kingly slaves, arrayed in gold and blood,
When they return from carnage, and are sent
In triumph bright beneath the populous battlement.

Afar, the city walls were thronged on high,
And myriads on each giddy turret clung,
And to each spire, far lessening in the sky,
Bright pennons on the idle winds were hung;
As we approached a shout of joyance sprung
At once from all the crowd, as if the vast
And peopled Earth its boundless skies among
The sudden clamour of delight had cast,
When from before its face some general wreck had pass'd.

Our armies thro' the City's hundred gates
Were poured, like brooks which to the rocky lair
Of some deep lake, whose silence them awaits,
Throng from the mountains when the storms are there;
And, as we pass'd thro' the calm sunny air,
A thousand flower-inwoven crowns were shed,

The token flowers of truth and freedom fair,
And fairest hands bound them on many a head,
Those angels of love's heaven, that over all was spread.

I trod as one tranced in some rapturous vision:
Those bloody bands, so lately reconciled,
Were, ever as they went, by the contrition
Of anger turned to love from ill beguiled,
And every one on them more gently smiled,
Because they had done evil:—the sweet awe
Of such mild looks made their own hearts grow mild,
And did with soft attraction ever draw
Their spirits to the love of freedom's equal law.

And they, and all, in one loud symphony
My name with Liberty commingling, lifted,
"The friend and the preserver of the free!
The parent of this joy! and fair eyes, gifted
With feelings caught from one who had uplifted
The light of a great spirit, round me shone;
And all the shapes of this grand scenery shifted
Like restless clouds before the stedfast sun.—
Where was that Maid? I asked, but it was known of none.

Laone was the name her love had chosen,
For she was nameless, and her birth none knew:
Where was Laone now?—The words were frozen
Within my lips with fear; but to subdue
Such dreadful hope to my great task was due,
And, when at length one brought reply that she
To-morrow would appear, I then withdrew
To judge what need for that great throng might be,
For now the stars came thick over the twilight sea.

Yet need was none for rest or food to care.
Even tho' that multitude was passing great,
Since each one for the other did prepare
All kindly succour—Therefore to the gate
Of the Imperial House, now desolate,
I pass'd, and there was found aghast, alone,
The fallen Tyrant!—Silently he sate
Upon the footstool of his golden throne,
Which, starred with sunny gems, in its own lustre shone,

Alone, but for one child, who led before him
A graceful dance: the only living thing
Of all the crowd, which thither to adore him
Flocked yesterday, who solace sought to bring
In his abandonment!—She knew the King
Had praised her dance of yore, and now she wove
Its circles, aye weeping and murmuring
'Mid her sad task of unregarded love,
That to no smiles it might his speechless sadness move.

She fled to him, and wildly claped his feet
When human steps were heard:—he moved nor spoke,
Nor changed his hue, nor raised his looks to meet
The gaze of strangers.—Our loud entrance woke
The echoes of the hall, which circling broke
The calm of its recesses,—like a tomb
Its sculptured walls vacantly to the stroke
Of footfalls answered, and the twilight's gloom
Lay like a charnel's mist within the radiant dome.

The little child stood up when we came nigh;
Her lips and cheeks seemed very pale and wan,
But on her forehead and within her eye
Lay beauty, which makes hearts that feed thereon

Sick with excess of sweetness;—on the throne
She leaned. The King with gathered brow, and lips
Wreathed by long scorn, did inly sneer and frown
With hue like that when some great painter dips
His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.

She stood beside him like a rainbow braided
Within some storm, when scarce its shadows vast
From the blue paths of the swift sun have faded.
A sweet and solemn smile, like Cythna's, cast
One moment's light, which made my heart beat fast
O'er that child's parted lips—a gleam of bliss,
A shade of vanished days,—as the tears past
Which wrapt it, even as with a father's kiss
I pressed those softest eyes in trembling tenderness.

The sceptered wretch then from that solitude
I drew, and of his change compassionate,
With words of sadness soothed his rugged mood.
But he, while pride and fear held deep debate,
With sullen guile of ill-dissembled hate
Glared on me as a toothless snake might glare:
Pity, not scorn, I felt, tho' desolate
The desolator now, and unaware
The curses which he mocked had caught him by the hair.

I led him forth from that which now might seem
A gorgeous grave: thro' portals sculptured deep
With imagery beautiful as dream
We went, and left the shades which tend on sleep
Over its unregarded gold to keep
Their silent watch.—The child trod faintingly,
And, as she went, the tears which she did weep,

Glanced in the star-light; wildered seemed she,
And, when I spake, for sobs she could not answer me.

At last the tyrant cried, "She hungers, slave!
Stab her, or give her bread!"—It was a tone
Such as sick fancies in a new made grave
Might hear. I trembled, for the truth was known,
He with this child had thus been left alone,
And neither had gone forth for food,—but he
In mingled pride and awe cowered near his throne,
And she, a nursling of captivity,
Knew nought beyond those walls, nor what such change might be.

And he was troubled at a charm withdrawn
Thus suddenly; that scepters ruled no more—
That even from gold the dreadful strength was gone
Which once made all things subject to its power—
Such wonder seized him, as if hour by hour
The past had come again; and the swift fall
Of one so great and terrible of yore
To desolateness, in the hearts of all
Like wonder stirred, who saw such awful change befal.

A mighty crowd, such as the wide land pours
Once in a thousand years, now gathered round
The fallen tyrant;—like the rush of showers
Of hail in spring, pattering along the ground,
Their many footsteps fell, else came no sound
From the wide multitude: that lonely man
Then knew the burthen of his change, and found,
Concealing in the dust his visage wan,
Refuge from the keen looks which thro' his bosom ran.

And he was faint withal. I sate beside him
Upon the earth, and took that child so fair
From his weak arms, that ill might none betide him
Or her;—when food was brought to them, her share
To his averted lips the child did bear;
But, when she saw he had enough, she ate
And wept the while;—the lonely man's despair
Hunger then overcame, and, of his state
Forgetful, on the dust as in a trance he sate.

Slowly the silence of the multitudes
Past, as when far is heard in some lone dell
The gathering of a wind among the woods—
And he is fallen! they cry; he who did dwell
Like famine or the plague, or aught more fell,
Among our homes, is fallen! the murderer
Who slaked his thirsting soul as from a well
Of blood and tears with ruin! He is here!
Sunk in a gulph of scorn from which none may him rear!

Then was heard—He who judged let him be brought
To judgment! Blood for blood cries from the soil
On which his crimes have deep pollution wrought!
Shall Othman only unavenged despoil?
Shall they, who by the stress of grinding toil
Wrest from the unwilling earth his luxuries,
Perish for crime, while his foul blood may boil
Or creep within his veins at will?—Arise!
And to high justice make her chosen sacrifice.

"What do ye seek? what fear ye?" then I cried,
Suddenly starting forth, "that ye should shed
The blood of Othman—if your hearts are tried
In the true love of freedom, cease to dread

This one poor lonely man—beneath Heaven shed
In purest light above us all, thro' earth,
Maternal earth, who doth her sweet smiles spread
For all, let him go free, until the worth
Of human nature win from these a second birth.

"What call ye *justice?* Is there one who ne'er
In secret thought has wished another's ill?—
Are ye all pure? Let those stand forth who hear,
And tremble not. Shall they insult and kill,
If such they be? their mild eyes can they fill
With the false anger of the hypocrite?
Alas, such were not pure—the chastened will
Of virtue sees that justice is the light
Of love, and not revenge, and terror and despite."

The murmur of the people, slowly dying,
Paused as I spake; then those who near me were
Cast gentle looks where the lone man was lying
Shrouding his head, which now that infant fair
Clasped on her lap in silence;—thro' the air
Sobs were then heard, and many kissed my feet
In pity's madness, and, to the despair
Of him whom late they cursed, a solace sweet
His very victims brought—soft looks and speeches meet.

Then to a home, for his repose assigned,
Accompanied by the still throng he went
In silence, where, to soothe his rankling mind,
Some likeness of his antient state was lent;
And, if his heart could have been innocent
As those who pardoned him, he might have ended
His days in peace; but his straight lips were bent,
Men said, into a smile which guile portended,
A sight with which that child-like hope with fear was blended.

'Twas midnight now, the eve of that great day
Whereon the many nations at whose call
The chains of earth like mist melted away,
Decreed to hold a sacred Festival,
A rite to attest the equality of all
Who live. So to their homes, to dream or wake
All went. The sleepless silence did recal
Laone to my thoughts, with hopes that make
The flood recede from which their thirst they seek to slake.

The dawn flowed forth, and from its purple fountains
I drank those hopes which make the spirit quail,
As to the plain between the misty mountains
And the great City with a countenance pale
I went: —it was a sight which might avail
To make men weep exulting tears, for whom
Now first from human power the reverend veil
Was torn, to see Earth from her general womb
Pour forth her swarming sons to a fraternal doom:

To see, far glancing in the misty morning,
The signs of that innumerable host,
To hear one sound of many made, the warning
Of Earth to Heaven from its free children lost,
While the eternal hills, and the sea tost
In wavering light, and, starring the blue sky
The city's myriad spires of gold, almost
With human joy made mute society,
Its witnesses with men who must hereafter be;

To see, like some vast island from the Ocean,
The Altar of the Federation rear
Its pile i'the midst; a work which the devotion

Of millions in one night created there,
Sudden as when the moonrise makes appear
Strange clouds in the east; a marble pyramid
Distinct with steps: that mighty shape did wear
The light of genius; its still shadow hid
Far ships: to know its height the morning mists forbid!

To hear the restless multitudes for ever
Around the base of that great Altar flow,
As on some mountain islet burst and shiver
Atlantic waves; and solemnly and slow
As the wind bore that tumult to and fro,
To feel the dreamlike music, which did swim
Like beams thro' floating clouds on waves below,
Falling in pauses from that Altar dim
As silver-sounding tongues breathed an aërial hymn.

To hear, to see, to live, was on that morn
Lethean joy! so that all those assembled
Cast off their memories of the past outworn:
Two only bosoms with their own life trembled,
And mine was one,—and we had both dissembled;
So with a beating heart I went, and one,
Who having much covets yet more, resembled;
A lost and dear possession, which not won,
He walks in lonely gloom beneath the noonday sun.

To the great Pyramid I came: its stair
With female quires was thronged: the loveliest
Among the free, grouped with its sculptures rare.
As I approached, the morning's golden mist,
Which now the wonder-stricken breezes kiss'd
With their cold lips, fled, and the summit shone
Like Athos seen from Samothracia, drest

In earliest light by vintagers, and one
Sate there, a female Shape upon an ivory throne.

A Form most like the imagined habitant
Of silver exhalations sprung from dawn,
By winds which feed on sunrise woven, to inchant
The faiths of men: all mortals eyes were drawn,
As famished mariners thro' strange seas gone
Gaze on a burning watch-tower by the light
Of those divinest lineaments—alone
With thoughts which none could share, from that fair sight
I turned in sickness, for a veil shrouded her countenance bright.

And, neither did I hear the acclamations,
Which, from brief silence bursting, filled the air
With her strange name and mine, from all the nations
Which we, they said, in strength had gathered there
From the sleep of bondage; nor the vision fair
Of that bright pageantry beheld,—but blind
And silent, as a breathing corpse did fare,
Leaning upon my friend, till, like a wind,
To fevered cheeks, a voice flowed o'er my troubled mind.

Like music of some minstrel heavenly gifted,
To one whom fiends inthrall, this voice to me;
Scarce did I wish her veil to be uplifted
I was so calm and joyous.—I could see
The platform when we stood, the statues three
Which kept their marble watch on that high shrine,
The multitudes, the mountains, and the sea,
As, when eclipse hath past, things sudden shine
To men's astonished eyes most clear and crystalline.

At first Laone spoke most tremulously:
But soon her voice that calmness which it shed
Gathered, and—"thou art whom I sought to see,
And thou art our first votary here," she said
"I had a dear friend once, but he is dead!—
And of all those on the wide earth who breathe,
Thou dost resemble him alone.—I spread
This veil between us two, that thou beneath
Shouldst image one who may have been long lost in death.

"For this wilt thou not henceforth pardon me?
Yes, but those joys which silence well requite
Forbid reply:—why men have chosen me
To be the Priestess of this holiest rite
I scarcely know, but that the floods of light
Which flow over the world have borne me hither
To meet thee, long most dear; and now unite
Thine hand with mine, and may all comfort wither
From both the hearts whose pulse in joy now beats together.

"If our own will as others' law we bind,
If the foul worship trampled here we fear;
If as ourselves we cease to love our kind!"—
She paused, and pointed upwards—sculptured there
Three shapes around her ivory throne appear;
One was a Giant, like a child asleep
On a loose rock, whose grasp crushed, as it were
In dream, sceptres and crowns; and one did keep
Its watchful eyes in doubt whether to smile or weep;

A Woman sitting on the sculptured disk
Of the broad earth, and feeding from one breast
A human babe and a young basilisk;

Her looks were sweet as Heaven's when loveliest
In Autumn eyes.—The third Image was drest
In white wings swift as clouds in winter skies.
Beneath his feet, 'mongst ghastliest forms, represt
Lay Faith, an obscene worm, who sought to rise,
While calmly on the Sun he turned his diamond eyes.

Beside that Image then I sate, while she
Stood, 'mid the throngs which ever ebbed and flowed
Like light amid the shadows of the sea
Cast from one cloudless star, and on the crowd
That touch, which none who feels forgets, bestowed;
And, whilst the sun returned the stedfast gaze
Of the great Image as o'er Heaven it glode,
That rite had place; it ceased when sunset's blaze
Burned o'er the isles; all stood in joy and deep amaze,
When in the silence of all spirits there
Laone's voice was felt, and thro' the air
Her thrilling gestures spoke, most eloquently fair.

1. "Calm art thou as yon sunset! swift and strong
As new-fledged Eagles, beautiful and young,
That float among the blinding beams of morning;
And underneath thy feet writhe Faith, and Folly,
Custom, and Hell, and mortal Melancholy—
Hark! the Earth starts to hear the mighty warning
Of thy voice sublime and holy;
Its free spirits, here assembled,
See thee, feel thee, know thee, now:—
To thy voice their hearts have trembled
Like ten thousand clouds which flow
With one wide wind as it flies!—

Wisdom! thy irresistible children rise
To hail thee, and the elements they chain
And their own will to swell the glory of thy train

2. "O Spirit, vast and deep as Night and Heaven!
Mother and soul of all to which is given
The light of life, the loveliness of being,
Lo! thou dost re-ascend the human heart,
Thy throne of power, almighty as thou wert,
In dreams of Poets old grown pale by seeing
The shade of thee:—now, millions start
To feel thy lightnings thro' them burning:
Nature, or God, or Love, or Pleasure,
Or Sympathy, the sad tears turning
To mutual smiles, a drainless treasure,
Descends amidst us;—Scorn and Hate,
Revenge and Selfishness, are desolate—
A hundred nations swear that there shall be
Pity and Peace and Love among the good and free!

3. "Eldest of things, divine Equality!
Wisdom and Love are but the slaves of thee,
The Angels of thy sway, who pour around thee
Treasures from all the cells of human thought,
And from the Stars, and from the Ocean brought,
And the last living heart whose beatings bound thee:
The powerful and the wise had sought
Thy coming; thou in light descending
O'er the wide land which is thine own,
Like the spring whose breath is blending
All blasts of fragrance into one,
Comest upon the paths of men!—
Earth bares her general bosom to thy ken,

And all her children here in glory meet
To feed upon thy smiles, and clasp thy sacred feet.

4. "My brethren, we are free! the plains and mountains
The grey sea shore, the forests and the fountains,
Are haunts of happiest dwellers;—man and woman,
Their common bondage burst, may freely borrow
From lawless love a solace for their sorrow,
For oft we still must weep, since we are human.
A stormy night's serenest morrow,
Whose showers are pity's gentle tears,
Whose clouds are smiles of those that die
Like infants without hopes or fears,
And whose beams are joys that lie
In blended hearts, now holds dominion;
The dawn of mind, which, upwards on a pinion
Borne, swift as sun-rise far illumines space,
And clasps this barren world in its own bright embrace!

5. "My brethren, we are free! the fruits are glowing
Beneath the stars, and the night winds are flowing
O'er the ripe corn, the birds and beasts are dreaming—
Never again may blood of bird or beast
Stain with its venomous stream a human feast,
To the pure skies in accusation steaming;
Avenging poisons shall have ceased
To feed disease and fear and madness:
The dwellers of the earth and air
Shall throng around our steps in gladness,
Seeking their food or refuge there.
Our toil from thought all glorious forms shall cull,
To make this Earth, our home, more beautiful,
And Science, and her sister Poesy,
Shall clothe in light the fields and cities of the free!

6. "Victory, Victory to the postrate nations!
Bear witness, Night, and ye, mute Constellations,
Who gaze on us from your crystalline cars!
Thoughts have gone forth whose powers can sleep no more!
Victory! Victory! Earth's remotest shore,
Regions which groan beneath the Antarctic stars,
The green lands cradled in the roar
Of western waves, and wildernesses
Peopled and vast, which skirt the oceans
When morning dyes her golden tresses,
Shall soon partake our high emotions:
Kings shall turn pale! Almighty Fear,
The Fiend-God, when our charmed name he hear,
Shall fade like shadow from his thousand fanes,
While Truth with Joy enthroned o'er his lost empire reigns!"

Ere she had ceased, the mists of night intwining
Their dim woof, floated o'er the infinite throng;
She, like a spirit thro' the darkness shining,
In tones whose sweetness silence did prolong,
As if to lingering winds they did belong,
Poured forth her inmost soul: a passionate speech
With wild and thrilling pauses woven among,
Which whoso heard was mute, for it could teach
To rapture like her own all listening hearts to reach.

Her voice was as a mountain stream which sweeps
The withered leaves of Autumn to the lake,
And in some deep and narrow bay then sleeps
In the shadow of the shores; as dead leaves wake
Under the wave, in flowers and herbs which make
Those green depths beautiful when skies are blue,
The multitude so moveless did partake

Such living change, and kindling murmurs flew
As o'er that speechless calm delight and wonder grew.

Over the plain the throngs were scattered then
In groups around the fires, which from the sea
Even to the gorge of the first mountain glen
Blazed wide and far: the banquet of the free
Was spread beneath many a dark cypress tree,
Beneath whose spires, which swayed in the red light,
Reclining as they ate, of Liberty,
And Hope, and Justice, and Laone's name,
Earth's children did a woof of happy converse frame.

Their feast was such as Earth, the general mother,
Pours from her fairest bosom, when she smiles
In the embrace of Autumn;—to each other
As when some parent fondly reconciles
Her warring children, she her wrath beguiles
With their own sustenance; they relenting weep:
Such was this Festival, which from their isles,
And continents, and winds, and oceans deep,
All shapes might throng to share, that fly, or walk, or creep.

Might share in peace and innocence, for gore
Or poison none this festal did pollute,
But piled on high, an overflowing store
Of pomegranates, and citrons, fairest fruit,
Melons, and dates, and figs, and many a root
Sweet and sustaining, and bright grapes, ere yet
Accursed fire their mild juice could transmute
Into a mortal bane, and brown corn set
In baskets; with pure streams their thirsting lips they wet.

Laone had descended from the shrine,
And every deepest look and holiest mind
Fed on her form, though now those tones divine
Were silent as she past; she did unwind
Her veil, as with the crowds of her own kind
She mixed; some impulse made my heart refrain
From seeking her that night, so I reclined
Amidst a group, where on the utmost plain
A festal watchfire burned beside the dusky main.

And joyous was our feast; pathetic talk,
And wit, and harmony of choral strains,
While far Orion o'er the waves did walk
That flow among the isles, held us in chains
Of sweet captivity, which none disdains
Who feels: but, when his zone grew dim in mist
Which clothes the Ocean's bosom, o'er the plains
The multitudes went homeward, to their rest,
Which that delightful day with its own shadow blest.

CANTO VI.

Beside the dimness of the glimmering sea,
Weaving swift language from impassioned themes,
With that dear friend I lingered, who to me
So late had been restored, beneath the gleams
Of the silver stars; and ever in soft dreams
Of future love and peace sweet converse lapt
Our willing fancies, 'till the palid beams

Of the last watchfire fell, and darkness wrapt
The waves, and each bright chain of floating fire was snapt.

And till we came even to the City's wall
And the great gate, then none knew whence or why
Disquiet on the multitudes did fall:
And first, one pale and breathless past us by,
And stared and spoke not;—then with piercing cry
A troop of wild-eyed women, by the shrieks
Of their own terror driven,—tumultuously
Hither and thither hurrying with pale cheeks,
Each one from fear unknown a sudden refuge seeks—

Then, rallying cries of treason and of danger
Resounded: and—"They come! to arms! to arms!
The Tyrant is amongst us, and the stranger
Comes to enslave us in his name! to arms!"
In vain: for Panic, the pale fiend who charms
Strength to forswear her right, those millions swept
Like waves before the tempest—these alarms
Came to me, as to know their cause I leapt
On the gate's turret, and in rage and grief and scorn I wept!

For to the North I saw the town on fire,
And its red light made morning palid now,
Which burst over wide Asia.—Louder, higher,
The yells of victory and the screams of woe
I heard approach, and saw the throng below
Stream through the gates like foam-wrought waterfalls
Fed from a thousand storms—the fearful glow
Of bombs flares overhead—at intervals
The red artillery's bolt mangling among them falls.

And now the horsemen come—and all was done
Swifter than I have spoken—I beheld
Their red swords flash in the unrisen sun.
I rushed among the rout to have repelled
That miserable flight—one moment quelled
By voice, and looks, and eloquent despair,
As if reproach from their own hearts withheld
Their steps, they stood; but soon came pouring there
New multitudes, and did those rallied bands o'erbear.

I strove, as drifted on some cataract
By irresistible streams, some wretch might strive
Who hears its fatal roar:—the files compact
Whelmed me, and from the gate availed to drive
With quickening impulse, as each bolt did rive
Their ranks with bloodier chasm:—into the plain
Disgorged at length the dead and the alive
In one dread mass were parted, and the stain
Of blood from mortal steel fell o'er the fields like rain.

For now the despot's blood-hounds with their prey,
Unarmed and unaware, were gorging deep
Their gluttony of death: the loose array
Of horsemen o'er the wide fields murdering sweep,
And with loud laughter for their tyrant reap
A harvest sown with other hopes, the while,
Far overhead, ships from Propontis keep
A killing rain of fire:—when the waves smile
As sudden earthquakes light many a volcano isle.

Thus, sudden, unexpected feast was spread
For the carrion fowls of Heaven.—I saw the sight—
I moved—lived—as o'er the heaps of dead,
Whose stony eyes glared in the morning light

I trod;—to me there came no thought of flight,
But with loud cries of scorn which whose heard
That dreaded death, felt in his veins the might
Of virtuous shame return, the crowd I stirred,
And desperation's hope in many hearts recurred.

A band of brothers, gathering round me, made,
Although unarmed, a stedfast front, and still
Retreating, with stern looks beneath the shade
Of gathered eyebrows, did the victors fill
With doubt even in success; deliberate will
Inspired our growing troop; not overthrown,
It gained the shelter of a grassy hill,
And ever still our comrades were hewn down,
And their defenceless limbs beneath our footsteps strown.

Immoveably we stood—in joy I found,
Beside me then, firm as a giant pine
Among the mountain vapours driven around,
The old man whom I loved—his eyes divine
With a mild look of courage answered mine,
And my young friend was near, and ardently
His hand grasped mine a moment—now the line
Of war extended to our rallying cry,
As myriads flocked in love and brotherhood to die.

For ever while the sun was climbing Heaven
The horseman hewed our unarmed myriads down
Safely, tho', when by thirst of carnage driven
Too near, those slaves were swiftly overthrown
By hundreds leaping on them:—flesh and bone
Soon made our ghastly ramparts; then the shaft
Of the artillery from the sea was thrown

More fast and fiery, and the conquerors laugh'd
In pride to hear the wind our screams of torment waft.

For on one side alone the hill gave shelter,
So vast that phalanx of unconquered men,
And there the living in the blood did welter
Of the dead and dying, which in that green glen,
Like stifled torrents, made a plashy fen
Under the feet—thus was the butchery waged
While the sun clombe Heaven's eastern steep—but when
It 'gan to sink a fiercer combat raged,
For in more doubtful strife the armies were engaged.

Within a cave upon the hill were found
A bundle of rude pikes, the instrument
Of those who war but on their native ground
For natural rights: a shout of joyance sent
Even from our hearts the wide air pierced and rent,
As those few arms the bravest and the best
Seized, and each sixth, thus armed, did now present
A line which covered and sustained the rest,
A confident phalanx, which the foes on every side invest.

That onset turned the foes to flight almost,
But soon they saw their present strength, and knew
That coming night would to our resolute host
Bring victory; so, dismounting close, they drew
Their glittering files, and then the combat grew
Unequal but most horrible;—and ever
Our myriads, whom the swift bolt overthrew,
Or the red sword, failed like a mountain river
Which rushes forth in foam to sink in sands for ever.

Sorrow and shame, to see with their own kind
Our human brethren mix, like beasts of blood
To mutual ruin armed by one behind,
Who sits and scoffs!—That friend so mild and good,
Who like its shadow near my youth had stood,
Was stabbed!—my old preserver's hoary hair,
With the flesh clinging to its roots, was strewed
Under my feet!—I lost all sense or care,
And like the rest I grew desperate and unaware.

The battle became ghastlier—in the midst
I paused, and saw, how ugly and how fell,
O Hate! thou art, even when thy life thou shedd'st
For love. The ground in many a little dell
Was broken, up and down whose steeps befell
Alternate victory and defeat, and there
The combatants with rage most horrible
Strove, and their eyes started with cracking stare,
And impotent their tongues they lolled into the air,

Flaccid and foamy, like a mad dog's hanging;
Want, and Moon-madness, and the pest's swift Bane
When its shafts smite—while yet its bow is twanging—
Have each their mark and sign—some ghastly stain;
And this was thine, O War! of hate and pain
Thou loathed slave. I saw all shapes of death,
And ministered to many, o'er the plain,
While carnage in the sun-beam's warmth did seethe,
Till twilight o'er the east wove her serenest wreath.

The few who yet survived, resolute and firm,
Around me fought. At the decline of day,
Winding above the mountain's snowy term,

New banners shone: they quivered in the ray
Of the sun's unseen orb—ere night the array
Of fresh troops hemmed us in—of those brave bands
I soon survived alone—and now I lay
Vanquished and faint, the grasp of bloody hands
I felt, and saw on high the glare of falling brands:

When on my foes a sudden terror came,
And they fled, scattering.—Lo! with reinless speed
A black Tartarian horse of giant frame
Comes trampling over the dead; the living bleed
Beneath the hoofs of that tremendous steed,
On which, like to an Angel, robed in white,
Sate one waving a sword;—the hosts recede
And fly, as thro' their ranks with awful might
Sweeps in the shadow of eve that Phantom swift and bright;

And its path made a solitude.—I rose,
And marked its coming: it relaxed its course
As it approached me, and the wind, that flows
Thro' night, bore accents to mine ear whose force
Might create smiles in death.—The Tartar horse
Paused, and I saw the shape its might which swayed,
And heard her musical pants, like the sweet source
Of waters in the desert, as she said,
"Mount with me, Laon, now!"—I rapidly obeyed.

Then "Away! away!" she cried, and stretched her sword
As 'twere a scourge over the courser's head,
And lightly shook the reins.—We spake no word,
But like the vapour of the tempest fled
Over the plain; her dark hair was dispread,
Like the pine's locks upon the lingering blast;
Over mine eyes its shadowy strings it spread

Fitfully, and the hills and streams fled fast,
As o'er their glimmering forms the steed's broad shadow past;

And his hoofs ground the rocks to fire and dust.
His strong sides made the torrents rise in spray
And turbulence, as if a whirlwind's gust
Surrounded us;—and still away! away!
Thro' the desert night we sped, while she alway
Gazed on a mountain which we neared, whose crest,
Crowned with a marble ruin, in the ray
Of the obscure stars gleamed;—its rugged breast
The steed strained up, and then his impulse did arrest

A rocky hill which overhung the Ocean:—
From that lone ruin, when the steed that panted
Paused, might be heard the murmur of the motion
Of waters, as in spots for ever haunted
By the choicest winds of Heaven, which are enchanted
To music by the wand of Solitude,
That wizard wild, and the far tents implanted
Upon the plain, be seen by those who stood
Thence marking the dark shore of Ocean's curved flood.

One moment these were heard and seen—another
Past; and the two, who stood beneath that night,
Each only heard, or saw, or felt, the other.
As from the lofty steed she did alight,
Cythna, (for, from the eyes whose deepest light
Of love and sadness made my lips feel pale
With influence strange of mournfullest delight,
My own sweet Cythna looked,) with joy did quail,
And felt her strength in tears of human weakness fail.

And for a space in my embrace she rested,
Her head on my unquiet heart reposing,
While my faint arms her languid frame invested:
At length she looked on me, and, half unclosing
Her tremulous lips, said, "Friend, thy bands were losing
The battle, as I stood before the King
In bonds.—I burst them then, and, swiftly choosing
The time, did seize a Tartar's sword, and spring
Upon his horse, and swift as on the whirlwind's wing,

"Have thou and I been borne beyond pursuer,
And we are here."—Then, turning to the steed,
She pressed the white moon on his front with pure
And rose-like lips, and many a fragrant weed
From the green ruin plucked, that he might feed;—
But I to a stone seat that Maiden led,
And, kissing her fair eyes, said, "Thou hast need
Of rest," and I heaped up the courser's bed
In a green mossy nook, with mountain flowers dispread.

Within that ruin, where a shattered portal
Looks to the eastern stars, abandoned now
By man, to be the home of things immortal,
Memories, like awful ghosts which come and go,
And must inherit all he builds below
When he is gone, a hall stood; o'er whose roof
Fair clinging weeds with ivy pale did grow,
Clasping its grey rents with a verdurous woof,
A hanging dome of leaves, a canopy moon-proof.

Th' autumnal winds, as if spell-bound, had made
A natural couch of leaves in that recess,
Which seasons none disturbed, but in the shade
Of flowering parasites did spring love to dress

With their sweet blooms the wintry loneliness
Of those dead leaves, shedding their stars, whene'er
The wandering wind her nurslings might caress;
Whose intertwining fingers, ever there,
Made music wild and soft that filled the listening air.

We know not where we go, or what sweet dream
May pilot us thro' caverns strange and fair
Of far and pathless passion, while the stream
Of life our bark doth on its whirlpools bear,
Spreading swift wings as sails to the dim air;
Nor should we seek to know, so the devotion
Of love and gentle thoughts be heard still there
Louder and louder from the utmost Ocean
Of universal life, attuning its commotion.

To the pure all things are pure! Oblivion wrapt
Our spirits, and the fearful overthrow
Of public hope was from our being snapt,
Tho' linked years had bound it there; for now
A power, a thirst, a knowledge, which below
All thoughts, like light beyond the atmosphere,
Clothing its clouds with grace, doth ever flow,
Came on us, as we sate in silence there,
Beneath the golden stars of the clear azure air.

In silence which doth follow talk that causes
The baffled heart to speak with sighs and tears,
When wildering passion swalloweth up the pauses
Of inexpressive speech:—the youthful years
Which we together past, their hopes and fears
The blood itself which ran within our frames,
That likeness of the features which endears

The thoughts expressed by them, our very names,
And all the winged hours which speechless memory claims,

Had found a voice:—and ere that voice did pass,
The night grew damp and dim, and thro' a rent
Of the ruin where we sate, from the morass
A wandering Meteor, by some wild wind sent,
Hung high in the green dome, to which it lent
A faint and palid lustre; while the song
Of blasts, in which its blue hair quivering beat,
Strewed strangest sounds the moving leaves among;
A wondrous light, the sound as of a spirit's tongue.

The Meteor shewed the leaves on which we sate,
And Cythna's glowing arms, and the thick ties
Of her soft hair, which bent with gathered weight
My neck near hers, her dark and deepening eyes,
Which, as twin phantoms of one star that lies
O'er a dim well, move, though the star reposes,
Swam in our mute and liquid ecstacies,
Her marble brow, and eager lips, like roses,
With their own fragrance pale, which spring but half uncloses.

The meteor to its far morass returned:
The beating of our veins one interval
Made still; and then I felt the blood that burned
Within her frame mingle with mine, and fall
Around my heart like fire; and over all
A mist was spread, the sickness of a deep
And speechless swoon of joy, as might befall
Two disunited spirits when they leap
In union from this earth's obscure and fading sleep.

Was it one moment that confounded thus
All thought, all sense, all feeling, into one
Unutterable power, which shielded us
Even from our own cold looks, when we had gone
Into a wide and wild oblivion
Of tumult and of tenderness? or now
Had ages, such as make the moon and sun,
The seasons and mankind, their changes know,
Left fear and time unfelt by us alone below?

I know not. What are kisses whose fire clasps
The failing heart in languishment, or limb
Twined within limb? or the quick dying gasps
Of the life meeting, when the faint eyes swim
Thro' tears of a wide mist, boundless and dim,
In one caress? What is the strong controul
Which leads the heart that dizzy steep to climb,
Where far over the world those vapours roll
Which blend two restless frames in one reposing soul?

It is the shadow which doth float unseen,
But not unfelt, o'er blind mortality,
Whose divine darkness fled not from that green
And lone recess, where lapt in peace did lie
Our linked frames, till, from the changing sky,
That night and still another day had fled;
And then I saw and felt. The moon was high,
And clouds, as of a coming storm, were spread
Under its orb,—loud winds were gathering overhead.

Cythna' sweet lips seemed lurid in the moon,
Her fairest limbs with the night wind were chill,
And her dark tresses were all loosely strewn
O'er her pale bosom:—all within was still,

And the sweet peace of joy did almost fill
The depth of her unfathomable look;—
And we sate clamly, though that rocky hill
The waves contending in its caverns strook,
For they foreknew the storm, and the grey ruin shook.

There we unheeding sate, in the communion
Of interchanged vows, which, with a rite
Of faith most sweet and sacred, stamped our union.—
Few were the living hearts which could unite
Like ours, or celebrate a bridal night
With such close sympathies, for they had sprung
From linked youth, and from the gentle might
Of earliest love, delayed and cherished long,
Which common hopes and fears made, like a tempest, strong.

And such is Nature's law divine, that those
Who grow together cannot choose but love,
If faith or custom do not interpose,
Or common slavery mar what else might move
All gentlest thoughts; as in the sacred grove
Which shades the springs of Æthiopian Nile,
That living tree, which, if the arrowy dove
Strike with her shadow, shrinks in fear awhile,
But its own kindred leaves clasps while the sun-beams smile;

And clings to them, when darkness may dissever
The close caresses of all duller plants
Which bloom on the wide earth—thus we for ever
Were linked, for love had nurs'd us in the haunts
Where knowledge from its secret source inchants
Young hearts with the fresh music of its springing,
Ere yet its gathered flood feeds human wants,

As the great Nile feeds Egypt; ever flinging
Light on the woven boughs which o'er its waves are swinging.

The tones of Cythna's voice like echoes were
Of those far murmuring streams; they rose and fell,
Mixed with mine own in the tempestuous air,—
And so we sate, until our talk befel
Of the late ruin, swift and horrible,
And how those seeds of hope might yet be sown,
Whose fruit is evil's mortal poison; well,
For us, this ruin made a watch-tower lone,
But Cythna's eyes looked faint, and now two days were gone

Since she had food:—therefore I did awaken
The Tartar steed, who, from his ebon mane,
Soon as the clinging slumbers he had shaken,
Bent his thin head to seek the brazen rein,
Following me obediently; with pain
Of heart, so deep and dread, that one caress,
When lips and heart refuse to part again
Till they have told their fill, could scarce express
The anguish of her mute and fearful tenderness.

Cythna beheld me part as I bestrode
That willing steed—the tempest and the night,
Which gave my path its safety as I rode
Down the ravine of rocks, did soon unite
The darkness and the tumult of their might,
Borne on all winds.—Far thro' the streaming rain
Floating at intervals the garments white
Of Cythna gleamed, and her voice once again
Came to me on the gust, and soon I reached the plain.

I dreaded not the tempest, nor did he
Who bore me, but his eyeballs wide and red

Turned on the lightning's cleft exultingly;
And when the earth beneath his tameless tread
Shook with the sullen thunder, he would spread
His nostrils to the blast, and joyously
Mock the fierce peal with neighings;—thus we sped
O'er the lit plain, and soon I could descry
Where Death and Fire had gorged the spoil of victory.

There was a desolate village in a wood
Whose bloom-inwoven leaves now scattering fed
The hungry storm; it was a place of blood,
A heap of hearthless walls;—the flames were dead
Within those dwellings now,—the life had fled
From all those corpses now,—but the wide sky
Flooded with lightning was ribbed overhead
By the black rafters, and around did lie
Women, and babes, and men, slaughtered confusedly.

Beside the fountain in the market-place
Dismounting, I beheld those corpses stare
With horny eyes upon each other's face,
And on the earth and on the vacant air,
And upon me, close to the waters where
I stooped to slake my thirst;—I shrank to taste,
For the salt bitterness of blood was there:
But tied the steed beside, and sought in haste
If any yet survived amid that ghastly waste.

No living thing was there beside one woman,
Whom I found wandering in the streets, and she
Was withered from a likeness of aught human
Into a fiend, by some strange misery:
Soon as she heard my steps she leaped on me,

And glued her burning lips to mine, and laughed
With a loud, long, and frantic laugh of glee,
And cried, "Now, Mortal, thou hast deeply quaffed
The Plague's blue kisses—soon millions shall pledge the
draught!

"My name is Pestilence—this bosom dry
Once fed two babes—a sister and a brother—
When I came home, one in the blood did lie
Of three death-wounds—the flames had ate the other!
Since then I have no longer been a mother,
But I am Pestilence;—hither and thither
I flit about, that I may slay and smother:—
All lips which I have kissed must surely wither,
But Death's—if thou art he, we'll go to work together!

"What seek'st thou here? the moonlight comes in flashes,—
The dew is rising dankly from the dell—
'Twill moisten her! and thou shalt see the gashes
In my sweet boy, now full of worms—but tell
First what thou seek'st."—"I seek for food."—"'Tis well,
Thou shalt have food. Famine, my paramour,
Waits for us at the feast—cruel and fell
Is Famine, but he drives not from his door
Those whom these lips have kissed alone. No more, no
more."

As thus she spake, she grasped me with the strength
Of madness, and by many a ruined hearth
She led, and over many a corpse:—at length
We came to a lone hut, where, on the earth
Which made its floor, she, in her ghastly mirth
Gathering from all those homes now desolate,
Had piled three heaps of loaves, making a dearth

Among the dead—round which she set in state
A ring of cold stiff babes; silent and stark they sate.

She leaped upon a pile, and lifted high
Her mad looks to the lightning, and cried: "Eat!
Share the great feast—to-morrow we must die!"
And then she spurned the loaves with her pale feet
Towards her bloodless guests;—that sight to meet,
Mine eyes and my heart ached, and, but that she
Who loved me did with absent looks defeat
Despair, I might have raved in sympathy;
But now I took the food that woman offered me;

And, vainly having with her madness striven,
If I might win her to return with me,
Departed. In the eastern beams of Heaven
The lightning now grew palid—rapidly,
As by the shore of the tempestuous sea
The dark steed bore me, and the mountain grey
Soon echoed to his hoofs, and I could see
Cythna among the rocks, where she alway
Had sate, with anxious eyes fixed on the lingering day.

And joy was ours to meet: she was most pale,
Famished, and wet and weary, so I cast
My arms around her, lest her steps should fail
As to our home we went, and, thus embraced,
Her full heart seemed a deeper joy to taste
Than e'er the prosperous know; the steed behind
Trod peacefully along the mountain waste.
We reached our home ere morning could unbind
Night's latest veil, and on our bridal couch reclin'd.

Her chilled heart having cherished in my bosom,
And sweetest kisses past, we two did share
Our peaceful meal;—as an autumnal blossom
Which spreads its shrunk leaves in the sunny air,
After cold showers, like rainbows woven there,
Thus in her lips and cheeks the vital spirit
Mantled, and in her eyes an atmosphere
Of health and hope; and sorrow languished near it,
And fear, and all that dark despondence doth inherit.

CANTO VII.

So we sate joyous as the morning ray
Which fed upon the wrecks of night and storm,
Now lingering on the winds; light airs did play
Among the dewy weeds; the sun was warm,
And we sate linked in the inwoven charm
Of converse and caresses sweet and deep.—
Speechless caresses, talk that might disarm
Time, tho' he wield the darts of death and sleep,
And those thrice mortal barbs in his own poison steep.

I told her of my sufferings and my madness,
And how, awakened from that dreamy mood
By Liberty's uprise, the strength of gladness
Came to my spirit in my solitude;
And all that now I was, while tears pursued
Each other down her fair and listening cheek
Fast as the thoughts which fed them, like a flood

From sunbright dales; and when I ceased to speak,
Her accents soft and sweet the pausing air did wake.

She told me a strange tale of strange endurance,
Like broken memories of many a heart
Woven into one; to which no firm assurance,
So wild were they, could her own faith impart;
She said that not a tear did dare to start
From the swoln brain, and that her thoughts were firm
When from all mortal hope she did depart,
Borne by those slaves across the Ocean's term,
And that she reached the port without one fear infirm.

One was she among many there, the thralls
Of the cold tyrant's cruel lust: and they
Laughed mournfully in those polluted halls;
But she was calm and sad, musing alway
On loftiest enterprise, till on a day
The Tyrant heard her singing to her lute
A wild, and sad, and spirit-thrilling lay,
Like winds that die in wastes—one moment mute
The evil thoughts it made, which did his breast pollute.

Even when he saw her wonderous loveliness,
One moment to great Nature's sacred power
He bent, and was no longer passionless;
But, when he bade her to his secret bower
Be borne, a loveless victim, and she tore
Her locks in agony, and her words of flame
And mightier looks availed not, then he bore
Again his load of slavery, and became
A king, a heartless beast, a pageant, and a name.

She told me what a loathsome agony
Is that when selfishness mocks love's delight,
Foul as in dreams most fearful imagery
To dally with the mowing dead—that night
All torture, fear, or horror, made seem light
Which the soul dreams or knows, and when the day
Shone on her awful frenzy, from the sight,
Where like a Spirit in fleshly chains she lay
Struggling, aghast and pale the Tyrant fled away.

Her madness was a beam of light, a power
Which dawned thro' the rent soul; and words it gave
Gestures and looks, such as in whirlwinds bore
Which might not be withstood, whence none could save
All who approached their sphere, like some calm wave
Vexed into whirlpools by the chasms beneath;
And sympathy made each attendant slave
Fearless and free, and they began to breathe
Deep curses, like the voice of flames far underneath.

The King felt pale upon his noonday throne:
At night two slaves he to her chamber sent,
One was a green and wrinkled eunuch, grown
From human shape into an instrument
Of all things ill—distorted, bowed, and bent,
The other was a wretch from infancy
Made dumb by poison, who nought knew or meant
But to obey: from the fire-isles came he,
A diver lean and strong, of Oman's coral sea.

They bore her to a bark, and the swift stroke
Of silent rowers clove the blue moonlight seas,
Until upon their path the morning broke;
They anchored then, where, be there calm or breeze,

The gloomiest of the drear Symplegades
Shakes with the sleepless surge;—the Æthiop there
Wound his long arms around her, and with knees
Like iron clasped her feet, and plunged with her
Among the closing waves out of the boundless air.

"Swift as an eagle stooping from the plain
Of morning light, into some shadowy wood
He plunged thro' the green silence of the main,
Thro' many a cavern which the eternal flood
Had scooped, as dark lairs for its monster brood;
And among mighty shapes which fled in wonder,
And among mightier shadows which pursued
His heels, he wound, until the dark rocks under
He touched a golden chain—a sound arose like thunder;

"A stunning clang of massive bolts redoubling
Beneath the deep—a burst of waters driven
As from the roots of the sea, raging and bubbling:
And in that roof of crags a space was riven
Thro' which there shone the emerald beams of heaven,
Shot thro' the lines of many waves inwoven,
Like sunlight thro' acacia woods at even,
Thro' which, his way the diver having cloven,
Past like a spark sent up out of a burning oven.

"And then," she said, "he laid me in a cave
Above the waters, by that chasm of sea,
A fountain round and vast, in which the wave,
Imprisoned, boiled and leaped perpetually,
Down which, one moment resting, he did flee,
Winning the adverse depth; that spacious cell
Like an upaithric temple wide and high,

Whose aëry dome is inaccessible,
Was pierced with one round cleft thro' which the sun-beams fell.

" Below, the fountain's brink was richly paven
With the deep's wealth, coral, and pearl, and sand
Like spangling gold, and purple shells engraven
With mystic legends by no mortal hand,
Left there, when, thronging to the moon's command,
The gathering waves rent the Hesperian gate
Of mountains, and on such bright floor did stand
Columns, and shapes like statues, and the state
Of kingless thrones, which Earth did in her heart create.

" The fiend of madness, which had made its prey
Of my poor heart, was lulled to sleep awhile.
There was an interval of many a day,
And a sea-eagle brought me food the while,
Whose nest was built in that untrodden isle,
And who to be the jailer had been taught
Of that strange dungeon; as a friend whose smile
Like light and rest at morn and even is sought,
That wild bird was to me, till madness misery brought ;—

" The misery of a madness slow and creeping,
Which made the earth seem fire, the sea seem air,
And the white clouds of noon, which oft were sleeping
In the blue heaven so beautiful and fair,
Like hosts of ghastly shadows hovering there;
And the sea-eagle looked a fiend, who bore
Thy mangled limbs for food!—Thus all things were
Transformed into the agony which I wore,
Even as a poisoned robe around my bosom's core.

" Again I knew the day and night fast fleeing,
The eagle, and the fountain, and the air;
Another frenzy came—there seemed a being
Within me—a strange load my heart did bear,
As if some living thing had made its lair
Even in the fountains of my life:—a long
And wonderous vision wrought from my despair,
Then grew, like sweet reality among
Dim visionary woes, an unreposing throng.

" Methought I was about to be a mother—
Month after month went by, and still I dreamed
That we should soon be all to one another,
I and my child; and still new pulses seemed
To beat beside my heart, and still I deemed
There was a babe within—and when the rain
Of winter thro' the rifted cavern streamed,
Methought, after a lapse of lingering pain,
I saw that lovely shape which near my heart had lain.

" It was a babe, beautiful from its birth,—
It was like thee, dear love; its eyes were thine,
Its brow, its lips, and so upon the earth
It laid its fingers, as now rest on mine
Thine own, beloved:—'twas a dream divine.
Even to remember how it fled, how swift,
How utterly, might make the heart repine,—
Tho' 'twas a dream."—Then Cythna did uplift
Her looks on mine, as if some doubt she sought to shift:—

A doubt which would not flee, a tenderness
Of questioning grief, a source of thronging tears;
Which, having past, as one whom sobs oppress,
She spoke: " Yes, in the wilderness of years

Her memory, aye, like a green home appears.
She sucked her fill even at this breast, sweet love,
For many months. I had no mortal fears;
Methought I felt her lips and breath approve,—
It was a human thing which to my bosom clove.

I watched the dawn of her first smiles, and soon
When zenith-stars were trembling on the wave,
Or when the beams of the invisible moon,
Or sun, from many a prism within the cave
Their gem-born shadows to the water gave,
Her looks would hunt them, and with outspread hand,
From the swift lights which might that fountain pave,
She would mark one, and laugh, when that command
Slighting, it lingered there, and could not understand.

" Methought her looks began to talk with me;
And no articulate sounds, but something sweet
Her lips would frame,—so sweet it could not be,
That it was meaningless; her touch would meet
Mine, and our pulses calmly flow and beat
In response while we slept; and on a day
When I was happiest in that strange retreat,
With heaps of golden shells we two did play,—
Both infants weaving wings for time's perpetual way.

" Ere night, methought, her waning eyes were grown
Weary with joy, and, tired with our delight,
We, on the earth, like sister twins lay down
On one fair mother's bosom:—from that night
She fled;—like those illusions clear and bright
Which dwell in lakes, when the red moon on high
Pause ere it wakens tempest;—and her flight,

Tho' 'twas the death of brainless phantasy,
Yet smote my lonesome heart more than all misery.

" It seemed that in the dreary night, the diver
Who brought me thither came again, and bore
My child away. I saw the waters quiver,
When he so swiftly sunk, as once before:
Then morning came—it shone even as of yore,
But I was changed—the very life was gone
Out of my heart—I wasted more and more,
Day after day, and, sitting there alone,
Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

" I was no longer mad, and yet methought
My breasts were swoln and changed:—in every vein
The blood stood still one moment, while that thought
Was passing—with a gush of sickening pain
It ebbed even to its withered springs again:
When my wan eyes in stern resolve I turned
From that most strange delusion, which would fain
Have waked the dream for which my spirit yearned
With more than human love,—then left it unreturned.

" So now my reason was restored to me,
I struggled with that dream, which, like a beast
Most fierce and beauteous, in my memory
Had made its lair, and on my heart did feast;
But all that cave and all its shapes possest
By thoughts which could not fade, renewed each one
Some smile, some look, some gesture, which had blest
Me heretofore: I, sitting there alone,
Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

" Time past, I know not whether months or years;
For day, nor night, nor change of seasons, made
Its note, but thoughts and unavailing tears:
And I became at last even as a shade,
A smoke, a cloud on which the winds have preyed,
'Till it be thin as air; until, one even,
A Nautilus upon the fountain played,
Spreading his azure sail where breath of Heaven
Descended not, among the waves and whirlpools driven.

" And when the Eagle came, that lovely thing,
Oaring with rosy feet its silver boat,
Fled near me as for shelter; on slow wing
The Eagle, hovering o'er his prey, did float;
But, when he saw that I with fear did note
His purpose, proffering my own food to him,
The eager plumes subsided on his throat—
He came where that bright child of sea did swim,
And o'er it cast in peace his shadow broad and dim.

" This wakened me; it gave me human strength,
And hope, I know not whence or wherefore, rose,
But I resumed my ancient powers at length;
My spirit felt again like one of those,
Like thine, whose fate it is to make the woes
Of human kind their prey—what was this cave?
Its deep foundation no firm purpose knows,
Immutable, resistless, strong to save,
Like mind while yet it mocks the all-devouring grave.

" And where was Laon? might my heart be dead,
While that far dearer heart could move and be?
Or whilst over the earth the pall was spread,

Which I had sworn to rend? I might be free,
Could I but win that friendly bird to me,
To bring me ropes; and long in vain I sought
By intercourse of mutual imagery
Of objects, if such aid he could be taught;
But fruit, and flowers, and boughs, yet never ropes he brought.

"We live in our own world, and mine was made
From glorious phantasies of hope departed:
Aye, we are darkened with their floating shade,
Or cast a lustre on them.—Time imparted
Such power to me, I became fearless-hearted;
My eye and voice grew firm, calm was my mind,
And piercing, like the morn, now it has darted
Its lustre on all hidden things, behind
Yon dim and fading clouds which load the weary wind.

"My mind became the book through which I grew
Wise in all human wisdom, and its cave,
Which like a mine I rifled through and through,
To me the keeping of its secrets gave—
One mind, the type of all, the moveless wave
Whose calm reflects all moving things that are,
Necessity, and love, and life, the grave,
And sympathy, fountains of hope and fear;
Justice, and truth, and time, and the world's natural sphere.

"And on the sand would I make signs to range
These woofs, as they were woven, of my thought;
Clear elemental shapes, whose smallest change
A subtler language within language wrought:
The key of truths which once were dimly taught

In old Crotona; and sweet melodies
Of love, in that lone solitude I caught
From mine own voice in dream, when thy dear eyes
Shone thro' my sleep, and did that utterance harmonize.

"Thy songs were winds whereon I fled at will
As in a winged chariot o'er the plain
Of crystal youth; and thou wert there to fill
My heart with joy, and there we sate again
On the grey margin of the glimmering main,
Happy as then but wiser far, for we
Smiled on the flowery grave in which were lain
Fear, Faith, and Slavery; and mankind was free,
Equal, and pure, and wise, in wisdom's prophecy.

"For to my will my fancies were as slaves
To do their sweet and subtle ministries;
And oft from that bright fountain's shadowy waves
They would make human throngs gather and rise
To combat with my overflowing eyes,
And voice made deep with passion—thus I grew
Familiar with the shock and the surprise
And war of earthly minds, from which I drew
The power which has been mine to frame their thoughts anew.

"And thus my prison was the populous earth,
Where I saw—even as misery dreams of morn
Before the east has given its glory birth—
Religion's pomp made desolate by the scorn
Of Wisdom's faintest smile, and thrones uptorn,
And dwellings of mild people interspersed
With undivided fields of ripening corn,
And love made free,—a hope which we have nurst
Even with our blood and tears,—until its glory burst.

"All is not lost! There is some recompense
For hope whose fountain can be thus profound,
Even throned Evil's splendid impotence,
Girt by its hell of power, the secret sound
Of hymns to truth and freedom—the dread bound
Of life and death past fearlessly and well,
Dungeons wherein the high resolve is found,
Racks which degraded woman's greatness tell,
And what may else be good and irresistible.

"Such are the thoughts which, like the fires that flare
In storm-encompassed isles, we cherish yet
In this dark ruin—such were mine even there;
As in its sleep some odorous violet,
While yet its leaves with nightly dews are wet,
Breathes in prophetic dreams of day's uprise,
Or, as ere Scythian frost in fear has met
Spring's messengers descending from the skies,
The buds foreknow their life—this hope must ever rise.

"So years had past, when sudden earthquake rent
The depth of ocean, and the cavern crackt
With sound, as if the world's wide continent
Had fallen in universal ruin wrackt;
And thro' the cleft streamed in one cataract
The stifling waters:—when I woke, the flood,
Whose banded waves that crystal cave had sacked,
Was ebbing round me, and my bright abode
Before me yawned—a chasm desert, and bare, and broad.

"Above me was the sky, beneath the sea:
I stood upon a point of shattered stone,
And heard loose rocks rushing tumultuously
With splash and shock into the deep—anon

All ceased, and there was silence wide and lone.
I felt that I was free! The Ocean-spray
Quivered beneath my feet, the broad Heaven shone
Around, and in my hair the winds did play,
Lingering as they pursued their unimpeded way.

"My spirit moved upon the sea like wind
Which round some thymy cape will lag and hover,
Tho' it can wake the still cloud, and unbind
The strength of tempest: day was almost over,
When thro' the fading light I could discover
A ship approaching—its white sails were fed
With the north wind—its moving shade did cover
The twilight deep;—the mariners in dread
Cast anchor when they saw new rocks around them spread.

"And when they saw one sitting on a crag,
They sent a boat to me;—the sailors rowed
In awe thro' many a new and fearful jag
Of overhanging rock, thro' which there flowed
The foam of streams that cannot make abode.
They came and questioned me, but, when they heard
My voice, they became silent, and they stood
And moved as men in whom new love had stirred
Deep thoughts: so to the ship we pass'd without a word.

CANTO VIII.

"I SATE beside the steersman then, and, gazing
Upon the west, cried, "Spread the sails! behold!
The sinking moon is like a watch-tower blazing

Over the mountains yet;—the City of Gold
Yon Cape alone does from the sight withhold;
The stream is fleet—the north breathes steadily
Beneath the stars; they tremble with the cold!
Ye cannot rest upon the dreary sea;—
Haste, haste to the warm home of happier destiny!"

"The Mariners obeyed—the Captain stood
Aloof, and, whispering to the Pilot, said,
'Alas, alas! I fear we are pursued
By wicked ghosts: a Phantom of the Dead,
The night before we sailed, came to my bed
In dream like that!' The Pilot then replied,
'It cannot be—she is a human Maid—
Her low voice makes you weep—she is some bride,
Or daughter of high birth—she can be nought beside.'

"We past the islets, borne by wind and stream,
And as we sailed the Mariners came near,
And thronged around to listen; in the gleam
Of the pale moon I stood, as one whom fear
May not attaint, and my calm voice did rear;
'Ye all are human—yon broad moon gives light
To millions who the self-same likeness wear.
Even while I speak, beneath this very night,
Their thoughts flow on like ours, in sadness or delight.

"What dream ye? Your own hands have built a home,
Even for yourselves on a beloved shore:
For some, fond eyes are pining till they come,
How they will greet him when his toils are o'er,
And laughing babes rush from the well-known door!
Is this your care? ye toil for your own good—
Ye feel and think—has some immortal power

Such purposes? or in human mood,
Dream ye some Power thus builds for man in solitude?

"What is that Power? Ye mock yourselves, and give
A human heart to what ye cannot know:
As if the cause of life could think and live!
'Twere as if man's own works should feel, and shew
The hopes, and fears, and thoughts, from which they flow,
And he be like to them. Lo! Plague is free
To waste, Blight, Poison, Earthquake, Hail, and Snow,
Disease, and Want, and worse Necessity
Of hate and ill, and Pride, and Fear, and Tyranny.

"What is that Power? Some moon-struck sophist stood
Watching the shade from his own soul upthrown
Fill Heaven and darken Earth, and in such mood
The Form he saw and worshiped was his own,
His likeness in the world's vast mirror shewn;
And 'twere an innocent dream, but that a faith,
Nursed by fear's dew of poison, grows thereon,
And that men say, that Power has chosen Death
On all who scorn its laws, to wreak immortal wrath.

"Men say that they themselves have heard and seen,
Or known from others who have known such things,
A Shade, a Form, which Earth and Heaven between
Wields an invisible rod—that Priests and Kings,
Custom, domestic sway, aye, all that brings
Man's free-born soul beneath the oppressor's heel,
Are his strong ministers, and that the stings
Of death will make the wise his vengeance feel,
Thro' truth and virtue arm their hearts with tenfold steel.

"And it is said, this Power will punish wrong;
Yes, add despair to crime, and pain to pain!
And deepest hell, and deathless snakes among,

Will bind the wretch on whom is fixed a stain,
Which, like a plague, a burthen, and a bane,
Clung to him while he lived;—for love and hate,
Virtue and vice, they say are difference vain—
The will of strength is right—this human state
Tyrants, that they may rule with lies, thus desolate.

"Alas, what strength? Opinion is more frail
Than yon dim cloud now fading on the moon
Even while we gaze, tho' it awhile avail
To hide the orb of truth—and every throne
Of Earth or Heaven, tho' shadow rests thereon,
One shape of many names:—for this ye plough
The barren waves of ocean; hence each one
Is slave or tyrant; all betray and bow,
Command or kill, or fear or wreak or suffer woe.

"Its names are each a sign which maketh holy
All power—aye, the ghost, the dream, the shade,
Of power—lust, falsehood, hate, and pride, and folly;
The pattern whence all fraud and wrong is made,
A law to which mankind has been betrayed;
And human love is as the name well known
Of a dear mother, whom the murderer laid
In bloody grave, and, into darkness thrown,
Gathered her wildered babes around him as his own.

"O love! who to the hearts of wandering men
Art as the calm to Ocean's weary waves,
Justice, or truth, or joy! thou only can
From slavery and religion's labyrinth caves
Guide us, as one clear star the seaman saves.
To give to all an equal share of good,
To track the steps of freedom tho' thro' graves

She pass, to suffer all in patient mood,
To weep for crime, tho' stained with thy friend's dearest
blood.

"To feel the peace of self-contentment's lot,
To own all sympathies, and outrage none,
And, in the inmost bowers of sense and thought,
Until life's sunny day is quite gone down,
To sit and smile with Joy, or, not alone,
To kiss salt tears from the worn check of Woe;
To live, as if to love and live were one.—
This is not faith or law, nor those who bow
To thrones on Heaven or Earth such destiny may know.

"But children near their parents tremble now,
Because they must obey—one rules another,
And as one Power rules both high and low,
So man is made the captive of his brother,
And Hate is throned on high with Fear her mother
Above the Highest—and those fountain-cells,
Whence love yet flowed when faith had choked all other,
Are darkened—Woman, as the bond-slave, dwells
Of man a slave, and life is poisoned in its wells.

"Man seeks for gold in mines, that he may weave
A lasting chain for his own slavery;—
In fear and restless care that he may live
He toils for others, who must ever be
The joyless thralls of like captivity;
He murders, for his chiefs delight in ruin;
He builds the altar, that its idol's fee
May be his very blood; he is pursuing,
O blind and willing wretch! his own obscure undoing.

"Woman!—she is his slave; she has become
A thing I weep to speak—the child of scorn,
The outcast of a desolated home.
Falsehood, and fear, and toil, like waves have worn
Channels upon her cheek, which smiles adorn,
As calm decks the false Ocean:—well ye know
What Woman is, for none of Woman born
Can choose but drain the bitter dregs of woe,
Which ever from the oppressed to the oppressors flow.

"This need not be; ye might arise, and will
That gold should lose its power, and thrones their glory;
That love, which none may bind, be free to fill
The world like light; and evil faith, grown hoary
With crime, be quenched and die.—Yon promontory
Even now eclipses the descending moon:—
Dungeons and palaces are transitory—
High temples fade like vapour—Man alone
Remains, whose will has power when all beside is gone.

"Let all be free and equal!—From your hearts
I feel an echo; thro' my inmost frame
Like sweetest sound, seeking its mate, it darts—
Whence come ye, friends? Alas, I cannot name
All that I read of sorrow, toil, and shame,
On your worn faces; as in legends old
Which make immortal the disastrous fame
Of conquerors and impostors false and bold,
The discord of your hearts I in your looks behold.

"Whence come ye, friends? from pouring human blood
Forth on the earth? or bring ye steel and gold,
That Kings may dupe and slay the multitude?
Or from the famished poor, pale, weak, and cold,

Bear ye the earnings of their toil? Unfold!
Speak! are your hands in slaughter's sanguine hue
Stained freshly? have your hearts in guile grown old?
Know yourselves thus? ye shall be pure as dew,
And I will be a friend and sister unto you.

"Disguise it not—we have one human heart—
All mortal thoughts confess a common home:
Blush not for what may to thyself impart
Stains of inevitable crime: the doom
Is this, which has, or may, or must, become
Thine, and all human kind's. Ye are the spoil
Which Time thus marks for the devouring tomb,
Thou and thy thoughts and they, and all the toil
Wherewith ye twine the rings of life's perpetual coil.

Disguise it not—ye blush for what ye hate,
And Enmity is sister unto Shame;
Look on your mind—it is the book of fate—
Ah! it is dark with many a blazoned name
Of misery—all are mirrors of the same;
But the dark fiend who, with his iron pen
Dipped in scorn's fiery poison, makes his fame
Enduring there, would o'er the heads of men
Pass harmless, if they scorned to make their hearts his den.

"Yes, it is Hate, that shapeless fiendly thing
Of many names, all evil, some divine,
Whom self-contempt arms with a mortal sting;
Which, when the heart its snaky folds intwine
Is wasted quite, and when it doth repine
To gorge such bitter prey, on all beside
It turns with ninefold rage, as with its twine

When Amphisbæna some fair bird has tied,
Soon o'er the putrid mass he threats on every side.

"Reproach not thine own soul, but know thyself,
Nor hate another's crime, nor loathe thine own.
It is the dark idolatry of self,
Which, when our thoughts and actions once are gone,
Demands that man should weep, and bleed, and groan;
O vacant expiation! be at rest.—
The past is Death's, the future is thine own;
And love and joy can make the foulest breast
A paradise of flowers, where peace might build her nest."

"Speak, thou! whence come ye?"—A Youth made reply,
"Wearily, wearily o'er the boundless deep
We sail.—Thou readest well the misery
Told in these faded eyes, but much doth sleep
Within, which there the poor heart loves to keep,
Or dare not write on the dishonoured brow;
Even from our childhood have we learned to steep
The bread of slavery in the tears of woe,
And never dreamed of hope or refuge until now.

"Yes—I must speak—my secret would have perished
Even with the heart it wasted, as a brand
Fades in the dying flame whose life it cherished,
But that no human bosom can withstand
Thee, wondrous Lady, and the wild command
Of thy keen eyes:—yes, we are wretched slaves,
Who from their wonted loves and native land
Are reft, and bear o'er the dividing waves
The unregarded prey of calm and happy graves.

"We drag afar from pastoral vales the fairest
Among the daughters of those mountains lone;
We drag them there, where all things best and rarest
Are stained and trampled:—years have come and gone
Since, like the ship which bears me, I have known
No thought;—but now the eyes of one dear Maid
On mine with light of mutual love have shone—
She is my life,—I am but as the shade
Of her,—a smoke sent up from ashes, soon to fade.

"For she must perish in the tyrant's hall—
Alas, alas!" He ceased, and by the sail
Sate cowering—but his sobs were heard by all,
And still before the ocean and the gale
The ship fled fast 'till the stars 'gan to fail,
All round me gathered with mute countenance,
The Seamen gazed, the Pilot worn and pale
With toil, the Captain with grey looks, whose glance
Met mine in restless awe—they stood as in a trance.

"Recede not! pause not now! thou art grown old,
But Hope will make thee young, for Hope and Youth
Are children of one mother, even Love—behold!
The eternal stars gaze on us!—is the truth
Within your soul? care for your own, or ruth
For other's sufferings? do ye thirst to bear
A heart which not the serpent custom's tooth
May violate?—Be free! and even here
Swear to be firm till death! They cried, 'We swear! we swear!'

"The very darkness shook, as with a blast
Of subterranean thunder at the cry;
The hollow shore its thousand echoes cast

Into the night, as if the sea, and sky,
And earth, rejoiced with new-born liberty,
For in that name they swore! Bolts were undrawn,
And on the deck with unaccustomed eye
The captives gazing stood, and every one
Shrank as the inconstant torch upon her countenance shone.

"They were earth's purest children, young and fair,
With eyes the shrines of unawakened thought,
And brows as bright as spring or morning, ere
Dark time had there its evil legend wrought
In characters of cloud which wither not.—
The change was like a dream to them; but soon
They knew the glory of their altered lot,
In the bright wisdom of youth's breathless noon,
Sweet talk, and smiles, and sighs, all bosoms did attune.

"But one was mute; her cheeks and lips most fair,
Changing their hue, like lilies newly blown
Beneath a bright acacia's shadowy hair,
Waved by the wind amid the sunny noon,
Shewed that her soul was quivering; and full soon
That Youth arose, and breathlessly did look
On her and me, as for some speechless boon:
I smiled, and both their hands in mine I took,
And felt a soft delight from what their spirits shook.

CANTO IX.

"That night we anchored in a woody bay,
And sleep no more around us dared to hover
Than, when all doubt and fear has past away,
It shades the couch of some unresting lover,
Whose heart is now at rest: thus night past over
In mutual joy:—around, a forest grew
Of poplars and dark oaks, whose shade did cover
The waning stars prankt in the waters blue,
And trembled in the wind which from the morning flew.

"The joyous mariners, and each free maiden,
Now brought from the deep forest many a bough,
With woodland spoil most innocently laden;
Soon wreaths of budding foliage seemed to flow
Over the mast and sails; the stern and prow
Were canopied with blooming boughs,—the while
On the slant sun's path o'er the waves we go
Rejoicing, like the dwellers of an isle
Doomed to pursue those waves that cannot cease to smile.

"The many ships, spotting the dark blue deep
With snowy sails, fled fast as ours came nigh,
In fear and wonder; and on every steep
Thousands did gaze: they heard the startling cry,
Like earth's own voice lifted unconquerably
To all her children, the unbounded mirth,
The glorious joy of thy name—Liberty!

They heard!—As o'er the mountains of the earth
From peak to peak leap on the beams of morning's birth;

"So from that cry, over the boundless hills,
Sudden was caught one universal sound,
Like a volcano's voice, whose thunder fills
Remotest skies,—such glorious madness found
A path thro' human hearts with stream which drowned
Its struggling fears and cares, dark custom's brood;
They knew not whence it came, but felt around
A wide contagion poured—they called aloud
On Liberty—that name lived on the sunny flood.

"We reached the port—alas! from many spirits
The wisdom which had waked that cry was fled,
Like the brief glory which dark Heaven inherits
From the false dawn, which fades ere it is spread,
Upon the night's devouring darkness shed:
Yet soon bright day will burst—even like a chasm
Of fire, to burn the shrouds, outworn and dead,
Which wrap the world; a wide enthusiasm,
To cleanse the fevered world as with an earthquake's spasm

"I walked thro' the great City then, but free
From shame or fear. Those toil-worn Mariners
And happy Maidens did encompas me;
And, like a subterranean wind that stirs
Some forest among caves, the hopes and fears
From every human soul, a murmur strange
Made as I past; and many wept with tears
Of joy and awe, and winged thoughts did range,
And half-extinguished words, which prophesied of change.

"For, with strong speech I tore the veil that hid
Nature, and Truth, and Liberty, and Love,—
As one who from some mountain's pyramid
Points to the unrisen sun!—The shades approve
His truth, and flee from every stream and grove.
Thus gentle thoughts did many a bosom fill—
Wisdom the mail of tried affections wove
For many a heart, and tameless scorn of ill
Thrice steep'd in molten steel the unconquerable will.

"Some said I was a maniac wild and lost;
Some, that I scarce had risen from the grave,
The Prophet's virgin bride, a heavenly ghost:—
Some said, I was a fiend from my weird cave,
Who had stolen human shape, and o'er the wave,
The forest, and the mountain, came;—some said
I was the child of God, sent down to save
Women from bonds and death, and on my head
The burthen of their sins would frightfully be laid.

"But soon my human words found sympathy
In human hearts: the purest and the best,
As friend with friend made common cause with me,
And they were few, but resolute;—the rest,
Ere yet success the enterprize had blest,
Leagued with me in their hearts;—their meals, their slumber,
Their hourly occupations, were possest
By hopes which I had arm'd to overnumber
Those hosts of meaner cares, which life's strong wings encumber.

"But chiefly women, whom my voice did waken
From their cold, careless, willing slavery,
Sought me: one truth their deary prison has shaken,—

They looked around, and lo! they became free!
Their many tyrants sitting desolately
In slave-deserted halls, could none restrain;
For wrath's red fire had withered in the eye,
Whose lightning once was death,—nor fear, nor gain,
Could tempt one captive now to lock another's chain.

"Those, who were sent to bind me, wept, and felt
Their minds outsoar the bonds which clasped them round,
Even as a waxen shape may waste and melt
In the white furnace; and a visioned swound,
A pause of hope and awe, the City bound,
Which, like the silence of a tempest's birth,
When in its awful shadow it has wound
The sun, the wind, the ocean, and the earth,
Hung terrible, ere yet the lightnings have leapt forth.

"Like clouds inwoven in the silent sky,
By winds from distant regions meeting there,
In the high name of truth and liberty,
Around the City millions gathered were,
By hopes which sprang from many a hidden lair;
Words, which the lore of truth in hues of grace
Arrayed, thine own wild songs which in the air
Like homeless odours floated, and the name
Of thee, and many a tongue which thou hadst dipped in flame.

"The Tyrant knew his power was gone, but Fear,
The nurse of Vengeance, bade him wait the event—
That perfidy and custom, gold and prayer,
And whatsoe'er, when force is impotent,
To fraud the sceptre of the world has lent,

Might, as he judged, confirm his failing sway.
Therefore throughout the streets the Priests he sent
To curse the rebels.—To their gods did they
For Earthquake, Plague, and Want, kneel in the public way.

"And grave and hoary men were bribed to tell
From seats were law is made the slave of wrong,
How glorious Athens in her splendour fell,
Because her sons were free,—and that among
Mankind the many to the few belong
By Heaven, and Nature, and Necessity.
They said, that age was truth, and that the young
Marred with wild hopes the peace of slavery,
With which old times and men had quelled the vain and free.

"And with the falsehood of their poisonous lips
They breathed on the enduring memory
Of sages and of bards a brief eclipse;
There was one teacher, whom necessity
Had armed with strength and wrong against mankind,
His slave and his avenger aye to be;
That we were weak and sinful, frail and blind,
And that the will of one was peace, and we
Should seek for nought on earth but toil and misery.

"'For thus we might avoid the hell hereafter.'
So spake the hypocrites, who cursed and lied;
Alas, their sway was past, and tears and laughter
Clung to their hoary hair, withering the pride
Which in their hollow hearts dared still abide;
And yet obscener slaves with smoother brow,
And sneers on their strait lips, thin, blue, and wide,
Said, that the rule of men was over now,
And hence the subject world to woman's will must bow;

"And gold was scattered thro' the streets, and wine
Flowed at a hundred feasts within the wall.
In vain! The steady towers in Heaven did shine
As they were wont, nor at the priestly call
Left Plague her banquet in the Æthiop's hall,
Nor Famine from the rich man's portal came,
Where at her ease she ever prays on all
Who throng to kneel for food: nor fear, nor shame,
Nor faith, nor discord, dimmed hope's newly-kindled flame.

"For gold was as a god whose faith began
To fade, so that its worshippers were few;
And Faith itself, which in the heart of man
Gives shape, voice, name, to spectral Terror, knew
Its downfall, as the altars lonelier grew,
Till the Priests stood alone within the fane;
The shafts of falsehood unpolluting flew,
And the cold sneers of calumny were vain,
The union of the free with discord's brand to stain.

"The rest thou knowest.—Lo! we two are here —
We have survived a ruin wide and deep—
Strange thoughts are mine.—I cannot grieve nor fear,
Sitting with thee upon this lonely steep,
I smile, tho' human love should make me weep.
We have survived a joy that knows no sorrow,
And I do feel a mighty calmness creep
Over my heart, which can no longer borrow
Its hues from chance or change, dark children of to-morrow.

"We know not what will come—yet, Laon, dearest,
Cythna shall be the prophetess of love.
Her lips shall rob thee of the grace thou wearest,

To hide thy heart, and clothe the shapes which rove
Within the homeless future's wintry grove;
For I now, sitting thus beside thee, seem
Even with thy breath and blood to live and move,
And violence and wrong are as a dream
Which rolls from stedfast truth an unreturning stream.

" The blasts of autumn drive the winged seeds
Over the earth—next come the snows, and rain,
And frosts, and storms, which dreary winter leads
Out of his Scythian cave, a savage train;
Behold! Spring sweeps over the world again,
Shedding soft dews from her ætherial wings;
Flowers on the mountains, fruits over the plain,
And music on the waves and woods she flings,
And love on all that lives, and calm on lifeless things.

" O Spring, of hope, and love, and youth, and gladness,
Wind-winged emblem! brightest, best, and fairest!
Whence comest thou, when, with dark winter's sadness
The tears that fade in sunny smiles thou sharest;
Sister of joy, thou art the child who bearest
Thy mother's dying smile, tender and sweet;
Thy mother Autumn, for whose grave thou wearest
Fresh flowers, and beams like flowers, with gentle feet,
Disturbing not the leaves which are her winding-sheet.

" Virtue, and Hope, and Love, like light and Heaven,
Surround the world.—We are their chosen slaves.
Has not the whirlwind of our spirit driven
Truth's deathless germs to thought's remotest caves?
Lo, Winter comes!—the grief of many graves,
The frost of death, the tempest of the sword,
The flood of tyranny, whose sanguine waves

Stagnate like ice at Faith, the enchanter's word,
And bind all human hearts in its repose abhorred.

" The seeds are sleeping in the soil: meanwhile
The tyrant peoples dungeons with his prey;
Pale victims on the guarded scaffold smile
Because they cannot speak; and, day by day,
The moon of wasting Science wanes away
Among her stars, and in that darkness vast
The sons of earth to their foul idols pray,
And grey Priests triumph, and like blight or blast
A shade of selfish care o'er human looks is cast.

" This is the Winter of the world;—and here
We die, even as the winds of Autumn fade,
Expiring in the frore and foggy air.—
Behold! Spring comes, tho' we must pass who made
The promise of its birth,—even as the shade
Which from our death, as from a mountain, flings
The future, a broad sunrise; thus arrayed
As with the plumes of overshadowing wings,
From its dark gulph of chains, Earth like an eagle springs.

" O dearest love! we shall be dead and cold
Before this morn may on the world arise:
Wouldst thou the glory of its dawn behold?
Alas! gaze not on me, but turn thine eyes
On thine own heart—it is a paradise
Which everlasting spring has made its own,
And, while drear Winter fills the naked skies,
Sweet streams of sunny thought, and flowers fresh blown,
Are there, and weave their sounds and odours into one.

" In their own hearts the earnest of the hope
Which made them great, the good will ever find;
And tho' some envious shade may interlope
Between the effect and it, one comes behind
Who aye the future to the past will bind—
Necessity, whose sightless strength for ever
Evil with evil, good with good, must wind
In bands of union, which no power may sever:
They must bring forth their kind, and be divided never!

" The good and mighty of departed ages
Are in their graves, the innocent and free,
Heroes, and Poets, and prevailing Sages,
Who leave the vesture of their majesty
To adorn and clothe this naked world;—and we
Are like to them—such perish, but they leave
All hope, or love, or truth, or liberty,
Whose forms their mighty spirits could conceive
To be a rule and law to ages that survive.

" So be the turf heaped over our remains
Even in our happy youth, and that strange lot,
Whate'er it be, when in these mingling veins
The blood is still, be ours; let sense and thought
Pass from our being, or be numbered not
Among the things that are; let those who come
Behind, for whom our stedfast will has bought
A calm inheritance, a glorious doom,
Insult with careless tread our undivided tomb.

" Our many thoughts and deeds, our life and love,
Our happiness, and all that we have been,
Immortally must live, and burn, and move,

When we shall be no more;—the world has seen
A type of peace; and as some most serene
And lovely spot to a poor maniac's eye
After long years, some sweet and moving scene
Of youthful hope returning suddenly,
Quells his long madness—thus man shall remember thee.

"And Calumny meanwhile shall feed on us
As worms devour the dead, and near the throne
And at the altar most accepted thus
Shall sneers and curses be;—what we have done
None shall dare vouch, tho' it be truly known;
That record shall remain, when they must pass
Who built their pride on its oblivion;
And fame, in human hope which sculptured was,
Survive the perished scrolls of unenduring brass.

"The while we two, beloved, must depart,
And Sense and Reason, those enchanters fair,
Whose wand of power is hope, would bid the heart
That gazed beyond the wormy grave despair:
These eyes, these lips, this blood, seems darkly there
To fade in hideous ruin; no calm sleep,
Peopling with golden dreams the stagnant air,
Seems our obscure and rotting eyes to steep
In joy;—but senseless death—a ruin dark and deep!

"These are blind fancies. Reason cannot know
What sense can neither feel nor thought conceive;
There is delusion in the world—and woe,
And fear, and pain—we know not whence we live,
Or why, or how, or what mute Power may give
Their being to each plant, and star, and beast,
Or even these thoughts.—Come near me! I do weave

A chain I cannot break—I am possest
With thoughts too swift and strong for one lone human
breast.

"Yes, yes—thy kiss is sweet, thy lips are warm—
O willingly beloved, would these eyes,
Might they no more drink being from thy form,
Even as to sleep whence we again arise,
Close their faint orbs in death. I fear nor prize
Aught that can now betide, unshared by thee—
Yes, Love when wisdom fails makes Cythna wise:
Darkness and death, if death be true, must be
Dearer than life and hope if unenjoyed with thee.

"Alas, our thoughts flow on with stream, whose waters
Return not to their fountain---Earth and Heaven,
The Ocean and the Sun, the clouds their daughters,
Winter, and Spring, and Morn, and Noon, and Even,
All that we are or know, is darkly driven
Towards one gulph.—Lo! what a change is come
Since I first spake—but time shall be forgiven,
Tho' it change all but thee!" She ceased—night's gloom
Meanwhile had fallen on earth from the sky's sunless dome.

Tho' she had ceased, her countenance, uplifted
To Heaven, still spake, with solemn glory bright;
Her dark deep eyes, her lips, whose motions gifted
The air they breathed with love, her locks undight;
"Fair star of life and love," I cried, "my soul's delight,
Why lookest thou on the crystalline skies?
Oh that my spirit were yon Heaven of night,
Which gazes on thee with its thousand eyes!"
She turned to me and smiled—that smile was Paradise!

CANTO X.

Was there a human spirit in the steed,
That thus with his proud voice, ere night was gone,
He broke our linked rest? or do indeed
All living things a common nature own,
And thought erect a universal throne,
Where many shapes one tribute ever bear?
And Earth, their mutual mother, does she groan
To see her sons contend? and makes she bare
Her breast, that all in peace its drainless stores may share?

I have heard friendly sounds from many a tongue
Which was not human—the lone Nightingale
Has answered me with her most soothing song
Out of her ivy bower, when I sate pale
With grief, and sighed beneath; from many a dale
The Antelopes who flocked for food have spoken
With happy sounds, and motions, that avail
Like man's own speech; and such was now the token
Of waning night, whose calm by that proud neigh was broken.

Each night that mighty steed bore me abroad,
And I returned with food to our retreat
And dark intelligence; the blood, which flowed
Over the fields, had stained the courser's feet.
Soon the dust drinks that bitter dew;—then meet
The vulture, and the wild-dog, and the snake,
The wolf, and the hyæna grey, and eat
The dead in horrid truce: their throngs did make
Behind the steed a chasm like waves in a ship's wake.

For, from the utmost realms of earth, came pouring
The banded slaves whom every despot sent
At that thron'd traitor's summons; like the roaring
Of fire, whose floods the wild deer circumvent
In the scorched pastures of the South; so bent
The armies of the leagued kings around
Their files of steel and flame;—the continent
Trembled, as with a zone of ruin bound;
Beneath their feet the sea shook with their navies' sound.

From every nation of the earth they came,
The multitude of moving heartless things,
Whom slaves call men: obediently they came,
Like sheep whom from the fold the shepherd brings
To the stall, red with blood; their many kings
Led them, thus erring, from their native home;
Tartar and Frank, and millions whom the wings
Of Indian breezes lull, and many a band
The Arctic Anarch sent, and Idumea's sand,

Fertile in prodigies and lies;—so there
Strange natures made a brotherhood of ill.
The desert savage ceased to grasp in fear
His Asian shield and bow, when, at the will
Of Europe's subtler son, the bolt would kill
Some shepherd sitting on a rock secure;
But smiles of wondering joy his face would fill,
And savage sympathy: those slaves impure,
Each one the other thus from ill to ill did lure.

For traitorously did that foul Tyrant robe
His countenance in lies;—even at the hour
When he was snatched from death, then o'er the globe,

With secret signs from many a mountain tower,
With smoke by day and fire by night, the power
Of kings and priests, those dark conspirators,
He called:—they knew his cause their own, and swore
Like wolves and serpents to their mutual wars
Strange truce, with many a rite which Earth and Heaven
abhors.

Myriads had come—millions were on their way;
The Tyrant past, surrounded by the steel
Of hired assassins, thro' the public way,
Choked with his country's dead:—his footsteps reel
On the fresh blood—he smiles. "Aye, now I feel
I am a King in truth!" he said, and took
His royal seat, and bade the torturing wheel
Be brought, and fire, and pincers, and the hook,
And scorpions, that his soul on its revenge might look.

"But first go slay the rebels.—Why return
The victor bands?" he said: "millions yet live,
Of whom the weakest with one word might turn
The scales of victory yet;—let none survive
But those within the walls—each fifth shall give
The expiation for his brethren here.—
Go forth, and waste and kill!"—"O king, forgive
My speech," a soldier answered;—"but we fear
The spirits of the night, and morn is drawing near;

"For we were slaying still without remorse,
And now that dreadful chief beneath my hand
Defenceless lay, when, on a hell-black horse,
An Angel bright as day, waving a brand
Which flashed among the stars, pass'd."—"Dost thou stand
Parleying with me, thou wretch?" the king replied;
"Slaves, bind him to the wheel; and of this band

Whoso will drag that woman to his side
That scared him thus, may burn his dearest foe beside;

"And gold and glory shall be his.—Go forth!"
They rushed into the plain.—Loud was the roar
Of their career: the horsemen shook the earth;
The wheeled artillery's speed the pavement tore;
The infantry, file after file, did pour
Their clouds on the utmost hills. Five days they slew
Among the wasted fields: the sixth saw gore
Stream thro' the city; on the seventh, the dew
Of slaughter became stiff, and there was peace anew:

Peace in the desert fields and villages,
Between the glutted beasts and mangled dead!
Peace in the silent streets! save when the cries
Of victims, to their fiery judgment led,
Made pale their voiceless lips, who seemed to dread
Even in their dearest kindred lest some tongue
Be faithless to the fear yet unbetrayed;
Peace in the Tyrant's palace, where the throng
Waste the triumphal hours in festival and song!

Day after day the burning Sun rolled on
Over the death-polluted land;—it came
Out of the East like fire, and fiercely shone
A lamp of Autumn, ripening with its flame
The few lone ears of corn;—the sky became
Stagnate with heat, so that each cloud and blast
Languish'd and died; the thirsting air did claim
All moisture, and a rotting vapour past
From the unburied dead, invisible and fast.

First Want, then Plague, came on the beasts; their food
Failed, and they drew the breath of its decay.
Millions on millions, whom the scent of blood
Had lured, or who, from regions far away,
Had tracked the hosts in festival array
From their dark deserts, gaunt and wasting now,
Stalked like fell shades among their perish'd prey.
In their green eyes a strange disease did glow;
They sank in hideous spasm, or pains severe and slow.

The fish were poisoned in the streams; the birds
In the green woods perished; the insect race
Was withered up; the scattered flocks and herds,
Who had survived the wild beasts' hungry chace,
Died moaning, each upon the other's face
In helpless agony gazing; round the City
All night the lean hyænas their sad case
Like starving infants wailed—a woeful ditty!
And many a mother wept, pierced with unnatural pity.

Amid the aërial minarets on high,
The Æthiopian vultures fluttering fell
From their long line of brethren in the sky,
Startling the concourse of mankind.—Too well
These signs the coming mischief did foretell:—
Strange panic first, a deep and sickening dread
Within each heart, like ice, did sink and dwell,
A voiceless thought of evil, which did spread
With the quick glance of eyes like withering lightnings shed.

Day after day, when the year wanes, the frosts
Strip its green crown of leaves, till all is bare;
So on those strange and congregated hosts

Came Famine, a swift shadow, and the air
Groaned with the burthen of a new despair;
Famine, than whom Misrule no deadlier daughter
Feeds from her thousand breasts, tho' sleeping there
With lidless eyes lie Faith, and Plague, and Slaughter,
A ghastly brood, conceived of Lethe's sullen water.

There was no food; the corn was trampled down,
The flocks and herds had perished; on the shore
The dead and putrid fish were ever thrown;
The deeps were foodless, and the winds no more
Creaked with the weight of birds, but, as before
Those winged things sprang forth, were void of shade;
The vines and orchards, Autumn's golden store,
Were burned;—so that the meanest food was weighed
With gold, and Avarice died before the god it made.

There was no corn—in the wide market-place
All loathliest things, even human flesh, was sold;
They weighed it in small scales—and many a face
Was fixed in eager horror then: his gold
The miser brought; the tender maid, grown bold
Thro' hunger, bared her scorned charms in vain;
The mother brought her eldest born, controuled
By instinct blind as love, but turned again
And bade her infant suck, and died in silent pain.

Then fell blue Plague upon the race of man.
"Oh, for the sheathed steel, so late which gave
Oblivion to the dead, when the streets ran
With brothers' blood! Oh, that the earthquakes grave
Would gape, or Ocean lift its stifling wave!"
Vain cries—throughout the streets, thousands pursued
Each by his fiery torture howl and rave,

Or sit, in frenzy's unimagined mood,
Upon fresh heaps of dead—a ghastly multitude.

It was not hunger now, but thirst. Each well
Was choked with rotting corpses, and became
A cauldron of green mist made visible
At sunrise. Thither still the myriads came,
Seeking to quench the agony of the flame,
Which raged like poison thro' their bursting veins;
Naked they were from torture, without shame,
Spotted with nameless scars and lurid blains,
Childhood, and youth, and age, writhing in savage pains.

It was not thirst but madness! Many saw
Their own lean image every where; it went
A ghastlier self beside them, till the awe
Of that dread sight to self-destruction sent
Those shrieking victims; some, ere life was spent,
Sought, with a horrid sympathy, to shed
Contagion on the sound; and others rent
Their matted hair, and cried aloud, "We tread
On fire! Th' avenging Power his hell on earth has spread."

Sometimes the living by the dead were hid.
Near the great fountain in the public square,
Where corpses made a crumbling pyramid
Under the sun, was heard one stifled prayer
For life, in the hot silence of the air;
And strange 'twas amid that hideous heap to see
Some shrouded in their long and golden hair,
As if not dead, but slumbering quietly
Like forms which sculptors carve, then love to agony.

Famine had spared the palace of the king:—
He rioted in festival the while,
He and his guards and priests; but Plague did fling
One shadow upon all. Famine can smile
On him who brings it food, and pass, with guile
Of thankful falsehood, like a courtier grey,
The house-dog of the throne; but many a mile
Comes Plague, a winged wolf, who loathes alway
The garbage and the scum that strangers make her prey.

So, near the throne, amid the gorgeous feast,
Sheathed in resplendent arms, or loosely dight
To luxury, ere the mockery yet had ceased
That lingered on his lips, the warrior's might
Was loosened, and a new and ghastlier night
In dreams of frenzy lapped his eyes; he fell
Headlong, or with stiff eyeballs sate upright
Among the guests, or, raving mad, did tell
Strange truths—a dying seer of dark oppression's hell.

The Princes and the Priests were pale with terror;
That monstrous faith wherewith they ruled mankind
Fell, like a shaft loosed by the bowman's error,
On their own hearts: they sought and they could find
No refuge—'twas the blind who led the blind!
So, thro' the desolate streets to the high fane
The many-tongued and endless armies wind
In sad procession: each among the train
To his own Idol lifts his supplications vain.

"O God!" they cried, "we know our secret pride
Has scorned thee, and thy worship, and thy name.
Secure in human power we have defied
Thy fearful might; we bend in fear and shame

Before thy presence; with the dust we claim
Kindred. Be merciful, O King of Heaven!
Most justly have we suffered for thy fame
Made dim, but be at length our sins forgiven,
Ere to despair and death thy worshipers be driven.

"O King of Glory! thou alone hast power!
Who can resist thy will? who can restrain
Thy wrath, when on the guilty thou dost shower
The shafts of thy revenge,—a blistering rain?
Greatest and best, be merciful again!
Have we not stabbed thine enemies, and made
The Earth an altar, and the Heavens a fane,
Where thou wert worshiped with their blood, and laid
Those hearts in dust which would thy searchless works have
weighed?

"Well didst thou loosen on this impious City
Thine angels of revenge: recall them now.
Thy worshipers, abased, here kneel for pity,
And bind their souls by an immortal vow.
We swear by thee! and to our oath do thou
Give sanction, from thine hell of fiends and flame,
That we will kill with fire and torments slow
The last of those who mocked thy holy name,
And scorned the sacred laws thy prophets did proclaim."

Thus they with trembling limbs and palid lips
Worshiped their own hearts' image, dim and vast,
Scared by the shade wherewith they would eclipse
The light of other minds;—troubled they pass'd
From the great Temple.—Fiercely still and fast
The arrows of the plague among them fell,
And they on one another gazed aghast,

And thro' the hosts contention wild befell,
As each of his own god the wondrous works did tell.

And Oromaze, Joshua, and Mahomet,
Moses, and Buddh, Zerdusht, and Brahm, and Foh,
A tumult of strange names, which never met
Before as watchwords of a single woe,
Arose. Each raging votary 'gan to throw
Aloft his armed hands, and each did howl
"Our God alone is God!" and slaughter now
Would have gone forth, when from beneath a cowl
A voice came forth, which pierced like ice thro' every soul.

'Twas an Iberian Priest from whom it came,
A zealous man, who led the legioned west
With words which faith and pride had steeped in flame,
To quell the unbelievers; a dire guest
Even to his friends was he, for in his breast
Did hate and guile lay watchful, intertwined,
Twin serpents in one deep and winding nest;
He loathed all faith beside his own, and pined
To wreak his fear of Heaven in vengeance on mankind.

But more he loathed and hated the clear light
Of wisdom and free thought, and more did fear
Lest, kindled once, its beams might pierce the night
Even where his Idol stood; for, far and near
Did many a heart in Europe leap to hear
That faith and tyranny were trampled down;
Many a pale victim, doomed for truth to share
The murderer's cell, or see, with helpless groan,
The priests his children drag for slaves to serve their own.

He dared not kill the infidels with fire
Or steel in Europe: the slow agonies
Of legal torture mocked his keen desire:
So he made truce with those who did despise
The expiation and the sacrifice,
That, though detested, Islam's kindred creed
Might crush for him those deadlier enemies;
For fear of God did in his bosom breed
A jealous hate of man, an unreposing need.

"Peace! Peace!" he cried. "When we are dead, the Day
Of Judgment comes, and all shall surely know
Whose God is God, each fearfully shall pay
The errors of his faith in endless woe!
But there is sent a mortal vengeance now
On earth, because an impious race had spurned
Him whom we all adore,—a subtile foe,
By whom for ye this dread reward was earned,
And kingly thrones, which rest on faith, nigh overturned.

"Think ye, because we weep, and kneel, and pray,
That God will lull the pestilence? It rose
Even from beneath his throne, where many a day
His mercy soothed it to a dark repose:
It walks upon the earth to judge his foes,
And what are thou and I, that he should deign
To curb his ghastly minister, or close
The gates of death, ere they receive the twain
Who shook with mortal spells his undefended reign?

"Aye, there is famine in the gulph of hell;
Its giant worms of fire for ever yawn.
Their lurid eyes are on us! Those who fell

By the swift shafts of pestilence ere dawn
Are in their jaws! They hunger for the spawn
Of Satan, their own brethren, who were sent
To make our souls their spoil. See! see! they fawn
Like dogs, and they will sleep, with luxury spent,
When those detested hearts their iron fangs have rent!

"Our God may then lull Pestilence to sleep:—
Pile high the pyre of expiation now!
A forest's spoil of boughs, and on the heap
Pour venomous gums, which sullenly and slow,
When touched by flame, shall burn, and melt, and flow,
A stream of clinging fire,—and fix on high
A net of iron, and spread forth below
A couch of snakes, and scorpions, and the fry
Of centipedes and worms,—earth's hellish progeny!

"Let Laon and Laone on that pyre,
Linked tight with burning brass, perish!—then pray
That, with this sacrifice, the withering ire
Of Heaven may be appeased." He ceased, and they
A space stood silent, as far, far away
The echoes of his voice among them died;
And he knelt down upon the dust, alway
Muttering the curses of his speechless pride,
Whilst shame, and fear, and awe, the armies did divide.

His voice was like a blast that burst the portal
Of fabled hell; and, as he spake, each one
Saw gape beneath the chasms of fire immortal,
And Heaven above seemed cloven, where, on a throne
Girt round with storms and shadows, sate alone
Their King and Judge. Fear killed in every breast
All natural pity then, a fear unknown

Before, and, with an inward fire possest
They raged like homeless beasts whom burning woods invest.

'Twas morn.—At noon the public crier went forth,
Proclaiming thro' the living and the dead,
"The Monarch saith, that his great Empire's worth
Is set on Laon and Laone's head:
He who but one yet living here can lead,
Or who the life from both their hearts can wring,
Shall be the kingdom's heir,—a glorious meed!
But he, who both alive can hither bring,
The Princess shall espouse, and reign an equal King."

Ere night the pyre was piled, the net of iron
Was spread above the fearful couch below;
It overtopped the towers that did environ
That spacious square; for Fear is never slow
To build the thrones of Hate, her mate and foe,
So she scourged forth the maniac multitude
To rear this pyramid—tottering and slow,
Plague-stricken, foodless, like lean herds pursued
By gad-flies, they have piled the heath, and gums, and wood

Night came, a starless and a moonless gloom.
Until the dawn, those hosts of many a nation
Stood round that pile, as near one lover's tomb
Two gentle sisters mourn their desolation;
And, in the silence of that expectation,
Was heard on high the reptiles hiss and crawl—
It was so deep, save when the devastation
Of the swift pest with fearful interval,
Marking its path with shrieks, among the crowd would fal

Morn came.—Among those sleepless multitudes
Madness, and Fear, and Plague, and Famine, still
Heaped corpse on corpse, as in autumnal woods
The frosts of many a wind with dead leaves fill
Earth's cold and sullen brooks. In silence still
The pale survivors stood; ere noon, the fear
Of Hell became a panic, which did kill
Like hunger or disease, with whispers drear,
As "Hush! hark! Come they yet? Just Heaven! thine hour is near!"

And Priests rushed thro' their ranks, some counterfeiting
The rage they did inspire, some mad indeed
With their own lies. They said their god was waiting
To see his enemies writhe, and burn, and bleed,—
And that, till then, the snakes of Hell had need
Of human souls.—Three hundred furnaces
Soon blazed thro' the wide City, where, with speed,
Men brought their infidel kindred to appease
God's wrath, and, while they burned, knelt round on quivering knees.

The noontide sun was darkened with that smoke,
The winds of eve dispersed those ashes grey.
The madness, which these rites had lulled, awoke
Again at sunset.—Who shall dare to say
The deeds which night and fear brought forth, or weigh
In balance just the good and evil there?
He might man's deep and searchless heart display,
And cast a light on those dim labyrinths where
Hope, near imagined chasms, is struggling with despair.

'Tis said, a mother dragged three children then,
To whose fierce flames which roast the eyes in the head,

And laughed, and died; and that unholy men,
Feasting like fiends upon the infidel dead,
Looked from their meal, and saw an Angel tread
The visible floor of Heaven, and it was she!
And, on that night, one without doubt or dread
Came to the fire, and said, "Stop, I am he!
Kill me!"—They burned them both with hellish mockery.

And, one by one, that night young maidens came,
Beauteous and calm, like shapes of living stone
Clothed in the light of dreams, and by the flame,
Which shrank as overgorged, they laid them down,
And sung a low sweet song, of which alone
One word was heard, and that was Liberty;
And that some kiss'd their marble feet, with moan
Like love, and died, and then that they did die
With happy smiles, which sunk in white tranquillity.

CANTO XI.

She saw me not—she heard me not—alone
Upon the mountain's dizzy brink she stood;
She spake not, breathed not, moved not—there was thrown
Over her look the shadow of a mood
Which only clothes the heart in solitude,
A thought of voiceless depth.—She stood alone;
Above, the Heavens were spread;—below, the flood
Was murmuring in its caves;—the wind had blown
Her hair apart, through which her eyes and forehead shone.

A cloud was hanging o'er the western mountains;
Before its blue and moveless depth were flying
Grey mists poured forth from the unresting fountains
Of darkness in the North:—the day was dying:—
Sudden the sun shone forth; its beams were lying
Like boiling gold on Ocean, strange to see,
And on the shattered vapours, which, defying
The power of light in vain, tossed restlessly
In the red Heaven, like wrecks in a tempestuous sea.

It was a stream of living beams, whose bank
On either side by the cloud's cleft was made;
And where its chasms that flood of glory drank,
Its waves gushed forth like fire, and, as if swayed
By some mute tempest, rolled on *her*. The shade
Of her bright image floated on the river
Of liquid light, which then did end and fade—
Her radiant shape upon its verge did shiver;
Aloft, her flowing hair like strings of flame did quiver.

I stood beside her, but she saw me not—
She looked upon the sea, and skies, and earth.
Rapture, and love, and admiration, wrought
A passion deeper far than tears, or mirth,
Or speech, or gesture, or whate'er has birth
From common joy; which, with the speechless feeling
That led her there, united, and shot forth
From her fair eyes, a light of deep revealing,
All but her dearest self from my regard concealing.

Her lips were parted, and the measured breath
Was now heard there;—her dark and intricate eyes,
Orb within orb, deeper than sleep or death,
Absorbed the glories of the burning skies,

Which, mingling with her heart's deep ecstacies,
Burst from her looks and gestures;—and a light
Of liquid tenderness, like love, did rise
From her whole frame,—an atmosphere which quite
Arrayed her in its beams, tremulous and soft and bright.

She would have clasped me to her glowing frame;
Those warm and odorous lips might soon have shed
On mine the fragrance and the invisible flame
Which now the cold winds stole;—she would have laid
Upon my languid heart her dearest head;
I might have heard her voice, tender and sweet;
Her eyes, mingling with mine, might soon have fed
My soul with their own joy.—One moment yet
I gazed—we parted then, never again to meet!

Never but once to meet on Earth again!
She heard me as I fled—her eager tone
Sank on my heart, and almost wove a chain
Around my will to link it with her own,
So that my stern resolve was almost gone.
"I cannot reach thee! whither dost thou fly?
"My steps are faint.—Come back, thou dearest one—
"Return, ah me! return!"—The wind pass'd by
On which those accents died, faint, far, and lingeringly.

Woe! woe! that moonless midnight.—Want and Pest
Were horrible, but one more fell doth rear,
As in a hydra's swarming lair, its crest,
Eminent among those victims—even the Fear
Of Hell: each girt by the hot atmosphere
Of his blind agony, like a scorpion stung
By his own rage upon his burning bier

Of circling coals of fire; but still there clung
One hope, like a keen sword on starting threads uphung:

Not death—death was no more refuge or rest;
Not life—it was despair to be!—not sleep,
For fiends and chasms of fire had dispossest
All natural dreams: to wake was not to weep,
But to gaze mad and palid at the leap
To which the Future, like a snaky scourge,
Or like some tyrant's eye which aye doth keep
Its withering beam upon his slaves, did urge
Their steps:—they heard the roar of Hell's sulphureous surge.

Each of that multitude alone, and lost
To sense of outward things, one hope yet knew;
As on a foam-girt crag some seaman tost
Stares at the rising tide, or like the crew
Whilst now the ship is splitting thro' and thro',
Each, if the tramp of a far steed was heard,
Started from sick despair, or if there flew
One murmur on the wind, or if some word
Which none can gather yet, the distant crowd has stirred.

Why became cheeks, wan with the kiss of death,
Paler from hope? they had sustained despair.
Why watched those myriads with suspended breath
Sleepless a second night? they are not here
The victims, and hour by hour, a vision drear,
Warm corpses fall upon the clay-cold dead;
And even in death their lips are writhed with fear.—
The crowd is mute and moveless—overhead
Silent Arcturus shines—ha! hear'st thou not the tread

Of rushing feet? laughter? the shout, the scream,
Of triumph not to be contained? See! hark!
They come, they come! give way! Alas, ye deem
Falsely—'tis but a crowd of maniacs stark
Driven, like a troop of spectres, thro' the dark,
From the choked well, whence a bright death-fire sprung,
A lurid earth-star, which dropped many a spark
From its blue train, and, spreading widely, clung
To their wild hair, like mist the topmast pines among.

And many, from the crowd collected there,
Joined that strange dance in fearful sympathies;
There was the silence of a long despair,
When the last echo of those terrible cries
Came from a distant street, like agonies
Stifled afar.—Before the Tyrant's throne
All night his aged Senate sate, their eyes
In stony expectation fixed; when one
Sudden before them stood, a Stranger and alone.

Dark Priests and haughty Warriors gazed on him
With baffled wonder, for a hermit's vest
Concealed his face; but, when he spake, his tone,
Ere yet the matter did their thoughts arrest,
Earnest, benignant, calm, as from a breast
Void of all hate or terror, made them start;
For, as with gentle accents he addressed
His speech to them, on each unwilling heart
Unusual awe did fall—a spirit-quelling dart.

"Ye Princes of the Earth, ye sit aghast
Amid the ruin which yourselves have made;
Yes, Desolation heard your trumpet's blast,

And sprang from sleep!—Dark Terror has obeyed
Your bidding—Oh that I, whom ye have made
Your foe, could set my dearest enemy free
From pain and fear! but evil casts a shade
Which cannot pass so soon, and Hate must be
The nurse and parent still of an ill progeny.

"Ye turn to Heaven for aid in your distress.
Alas, that ye, the mighty and the wise,
Who, if he dared, might not aspire to less
Than ye conceive of power, should fear the lies
Which thou, and thou, didst frame for mysteries
To blind your slaves:—consider your own thought,
An empty and a cruel sacrifice
Ye now prepare, for a vain idol wrought
Out of the fears and hate which vain desires have brought.

"Ye seek for happiness—alas the day!
Ye find it not in luxury nor in gold,
Nor in the fame nor in the envied sway
For which, O willing slaves to Custom old,
Severe task mistress! ye your hearts have sold.
Ye seek for peace, and when ye die to dream
No evil dreams: all mortal things are cold
And senseless then. If aught survive, I deem
It must be love and joy, for they immortal seem.

"Fear not the future, weep not for the past.
Oh, could I win your ears to dare be now
Glorious, and great, and calm! that ye would cast

Into the dust those symbols of your woe,
Purple, and gold, and steel! that ye would go
Proclaiming to the nations whence ye came,
That Want, and Plague, and Fear, from slavery flow;
And that mankind is free, and that the shame
Of royalty and faith is lost in freedom's fame.

"If thus 'tis well—if not, I come to say
That Laon——." While the Stranger spoke, among
The Council sudden tumult and affray
Arose, for many of those warriors young
Had on his eloquent accents fed and hung
Like bees on mountain flowers; they knew the truth,
And from their thrones in vindication sprung;
The men of faith and law then without ruth
Drew forth their secret steel, and stabbed each ardent youth.

They stabbed them in the back and sneered.—A slave,
Who stood behind the throne, those corpses drew
Each to its bloody, dark, and secret, grave;
And one more daring raised his steel anew
To pierce the Stranger: "What hast thou to do
With me, poor wretch?"—Calm, solemn, and severe,
That voice unstrung his sinews, and he threw
His dagger on the ground, and, pale with fear,
Sate silently—his voice then did the Stranger rear.

"It doth avail not that I weep for ye—
Ye cannot change, since ye are old and grey,
And ye have chosen your lot.—Your fame must be
A book of blood, whence in a milder day
Men shall learn truth, when ye are wrapt in clay:

Now ye shall triumph. I am Laon's friend,
And him to your revenge will I betray,
So ye concede one easy boon. Attend!
For now I speak of things which ye can apprehend.

"There is a People mighty in its youth,
A land beyond the Oceans of the West,
Where, tho' with rudest rites, Freedom and Truth
Are worshiped; from a glorious Mother's breast,
Who, since high Athens fell, among the rest
Sate like the Queen of Nations, but in woe,
By inbred monsters outraged and oppressed,
Turns to her chainless child for succour now,
And draws the milk of Power in Wisdom's fullest flow.

"This land is like an Eagle, whose young gaze
Feeds on the noontide beam, whose golden plume
Floats moveless on the storm, and in the blaze
Of sun-rise gleams when Earth is wrapt in gloom.
An epitaph of glory for the tomb
Of murdered Europe may thy fame be made,
Great People! As the sands shalt thou become.
Thy growth is swift as morn, when night must fade;
The multitudinous Earth shall sleep beneath thy shade.

"Yes, in the desert then is built a home
For Freedom. Genius is made strong to rear
The monuments of man beneath the dome
Of a new Heaven; myriads assemble there,
Whom the proud lords of man, in rage or fear,
Drive from their wasted homes. The boon I pray
Is this—that Cythna shall be convoyed there—

Nay, start not at the name—America!
And then to you this night Laon will I betray.

"With me do what ye will. I am your foe!"
The light of such a joy as makes the stare
Of hungry snakes like living emeralds glow
Shone in a hundred human eyes.—"Where, where
Is Laon? haste! fly! drag him swiftly here!
We grant thy boon."—"I put no trust in ye.
Swear by the Power ye dread."—"We swear, we swear!"
The Stranger threw his vest back suddenly,
And smiled in gentle pride, and said, "Lo! I am he!"

CANTO XII.

The transport of a fierce and monstrous gladness
Spread thro' the multitudinous streets, fast flying
Upon the winds of fear; from his dull madness
The starveling waked, and died in joy; the dying,
Among the corpses in stark agony lying,
Just heard the happy tidings, and in hope
Closed their faint eyes; from house to house replying
With loud acclaim, the living shook Heaven's cope,
And filled the startled Earth with echoes: morn did ope

Its pale eyes then; and lo! the long array
Of guards in golden arms, and priests beside,
Singing their bloody hymns, whose garbs betray
The blackness of the faith it seems to hide;
And see, the Tyrant's gem-wrought chariot glide
Among the gloomy cowls and glittering spears—
A Shape of light is sitting by his side,
A child most beautiful. I'the midst appears
Laon,—exempt alone from mortal hopes and fears.

His head and feet are bare; his hands are bound
Behind with heavy chains, yet none do wreak
Their scoffs on him, tho' myriads throng around.
There are no sneers upon his lip which speak
That scorn or hate has made him bold; his cheek
Resolve has not turned pale; his eyes are mild
And calm, and, like the morn about to break,
Smile on mankind; his heart seems reconciled
To all things and itself, like a reposing child.

Tumult was in the soul of all, beside
Ill joy, or doubt, or fear; but those, who saw
Their tranquil victim pass, felt wonder glide
Into their brain, and became calm with awe.—
See, the slow pageant near the pile doth draw.
A thousand torches in the spacious square,
Borne by the ready slaves of ruthless law,
Await the signal round: the morning fair
Is changed to a dim night by that unnatural glare.

And see! beneath a sun-bright canopy,
Upon a platform level with the pile,

The anxious Tyrant sit, enthroned on high,
Girt by the chieftains of the host. All smile
In expectation, but one child: the while
I, Laon, led by mutes, ascend my bier
Of fire, and look around. Each distant isle
Is dark in the bright dawn; towers far and near
Pierce like reposing flames the tremulous atmosphere

There was such silence through the host, as when
An earthquake, trampling on some populous town,
Has crushed ten thousand with one tread, and men
Expect the second. All were mute but one,
That fairest child, who, bold with love, alone
Stood up before the King, without avail,
Pleading for Laon's life. Her stifled groan
Was heard—she trembled like an aspin pale
Among the gloomy pines of a Norwegian vale.

What were his thoughts linked in the morning sun
Among those reptiles, stingless with delay,
Even like a tyrant's wrath?—The signal gun
Roared—hark, again! In that dread pause he lay
As in a quiet dream—the slaves obey—
A thousand torches drop,—and hark, the last
Bursts on that awful silence. Far away
Millions, with hearts that beat both loud and fast,
Watch for the springing flame expectant and aghast.

They fly—the torches fall—a cry of fear
Has startled the triumphant!—they recede!
For, ere the cannon's roar has died, they hear
The tramp of hoofs like earthquake, and a steed,
Dark and gigantic, with the tempest's speed,

Bursts thro' their ranks: a woman sits thereon,
Fairer it seems than aught that earth can breed,
Calm, radiant, like the phantom of the dawn,
A spirit from the caves of day-light wandering gone.

All thought it was God's Angel come to sweep
The lingering guilty to their fiery grave;
The tyrant from his throne in dread did leap,—
Her innocence his child from fear did save.
Scared by the faith they feigned, each priestly slave
Knelt for his mercy whom they served with blood,
And, like the refluence of a mighty wave
Sucked into the loud sea, the multitude
With crushing panic fled in terror's altered mood.

They pause, they blush, they gaze—a gathering shout
Bursts like one sound from the ten thousand streams
Of a tempestuous sea:—that sudden rout
One checked, who never in his mildest dreams
Felt awe from grace or loveliness, the seams
Of his rent heart so hard and cold a creed
Had seared with blistering ice—but he misdeems
That he is wise, whose wounds do only bleed
Only for self; thus thought the Iberian Priest indeed.

And others too thought he was wise to see
In pain, and fear, and hate, something divine;
In love and beauty, no divinity.—
Now with a bitter smile, whose light did shine
Like a fiend's hope upon his lips and eyne,
He said, and the persuasion of that sneer
Rallied his trembling comrades—"It is mine

To stand alone, when kings and soldiers fear
A woman? Heaven has sent its other victim here."

"Were it not impious," said the King, "to break
Our holy oath?"—"Impious to keep it, say!"
Shrieked the exulting Priest:—"Slaves, to the stake
Bind her, and on my head the burthen lay
Of her just torments:—at the Judgment Day
Will I stand up before the golden throne
Of Heaven, and cry, to thee did I betray
An Infidel; but for me she would have known
Another moment's joy!—the glory be thine own."

They trembled, but replied not, nor obeyed,
Pausing in breathless silence. Cythna sprang
From her gigantic steed, who, like a shade
Chased by the winds, those vacant streets among
Fled tameless, as the brazen rein she flung
Upon his neck, and kissed his mooned brow.
A piteous sight, that one so fair and young
The clasp of such a fearful death should woo
With smiles of tender joy as beamed from Cythna now.

The warm tears burst in spite of faith and fear
From many a tremulous eye, but, like soft dews
Which feed spring's earliest buds, hung gathered there,
Frozen by doubt.—Alas, they could not choose
But weep; for, when her faint limbs did refuse
To climb the pyre, upon the mutes she smiled;
And, with her eloquent gestures and the hues
Of her quick lips, even as a weary child
Wins sleep from some fond nurse with its caresses mild,

She won them, tho' unwilling, her to bind
Near me, among the snakes. When then had fled
One soft reproach that was most thrilling kind,
She smiled on me, and nothing then we said,
But each upon the other's countenance fed
Looks of insatiate love. The mighty veil
Which doth divide the living and the dead
Was almost rent—the world grew dim and pale,—
All light in Heaven or Earth beside our love did fail.—

Yet,—yet—one brief relapse, like the last beam
Of dying flames, the stainless air around
Hung silent and serene. A blood-red gleam
Burst upwards, hurling fiercely from the ground
The globed smoke.—I heard the mighty sound
Of its uprise, like a tempestuous ocean;
And, thro' its chasms I saw, as in a swound,
The tyrant's child fall without life or motion
Before his throne, subdued by some unseen emotion.

And is this death? The pyre has disappeared,
The Pestilence, the Tyrant, and the throng;
The flames grow silent—slowly there is heard
The music of a breath-suspending song,
Which, like the kiss of love when life is young,
Steeps the faint eyes in darkness sweet and deep;
With ever changing notes it floats along,
Till on my passive soul there seemed to creep
A melody like waves on wrinkled sands that leap.

The warm touch of a soft and tremulous hand
Wakened me then. Lo, Cythna sate reclined
Beside me, on the waved and golden sand

Of a clear pool, upon a bank o'ertwined
With strange and star-bright flowers, which to the wind
Breathed divine odour: high above was spread
The emerald heaven of trees of unknown kind,
Whose moonlike blooms and bright fruit overhead
A shadow, which was light, upon the waters shed.

And round about sloped many a lawny mountain
With incense-bearing forests, and vast caves
Of marble radiance to that mighty fountain;
And, where the flood its own bright margin laves,
Their echoes talk with its eternal waves,
Which, from the depths whose jagged caverns breed
Their unreposing strife, it lifts and heaves,
Till thro' a chasm of hills they roll, and feed
A river deep, which flies with smooth but arrowy speed.

As we sate gazing in a trance of wonder
A boat approached, borne by the musical air
Along the waves which sung and sparkled under
Its rapid keel—a winged shape sate there,
A child with silver-shining wings, so fair,
That, as her bark did thro' the waters glide,
The shadow of the lingering waves did wear
Light as from starry beams; from side to side,
While veering to the wind, her plumes the bark did guide.

The boat was one curved shell of hollow pearl,
Almost translucent with the light divine
Of her within; the prow and stern did curl,
Horned on high, like the young moon supine,
When, o'er dim twilight mountains dark with pine,

It floats upon the sunset's sea of beams,
Whose golden waves in many a purple line
Fade fast, till, borne on sun-light's ebbing streams,
Dilating, on earth's verge the sunken meteor gleams.

Its keel has struck the sands beside our feet.—
Then Cythna turned to me, and from her eyes,
Which swam with unshed tears, a look more sweet
Than happy love, a wild and glad surprise,
Glanced as she spake: "Aye, this is Paradise
And not a dream, and we are all united!
Lo, that is mine own child, who, in the guise
Of madness, came like day to one benighted
In lonesome woods: my heart is now too well requited!"

And then she wept aloud, and in her arms
Clasped that bright Shape, less marvellously fair
Than her own human hues and living charms;
Which, as she leaned in passion's silence there,
Breathed warmth on the cold bosom of the air,
Which seemed to blush and tremble with delight.
The glossy darkness of her streaming hair
Fell o'er that snowy child, and wrapt from sight
The fond and long embrace which did their hearts unite.

Then the bright child, the plumed Seraph, came,
And fixed its blue and beaming eyes on mine,
And said, "I was disturbed by tremulous shame
When once we met, yet knew that I was thine
From the same hour in which thy lips divine
Kindled a clinging dream within my brain,
Which ever waked when I might sleep, to twine

Thine image with *her* memory dear—again
We meet, exempted now from mortal fear or pain.

"When the consuming flames had wrapt ye round,
The hope which I had cherished went away.
I fell in agony on the senseless ground,
And hid mine eyes in dust, and far astray
My mind was gone, when bright, like dawning day,
The Spectre of the Plague before me flew,
And breathed upon my lips, and seemed to say,
"They wait for thee, beloved!"—Then I knew
The death-mark on my breast, and became calm anew.

"It was the calm of love—for I was dying.
I saw the black and half-extinguished pyre
In its own grey and shrunken ashes lying;
The pitchy smoke of the departed fire
Still hung in many a hollow dome and spire
Above the towers like night; beneath whose shade,
Awed by the ending of their own desire,
The armies stood: a vacancy was made
In expectation's depth, and so they stood dismayed.

"The frightful silence of that altered mood
The tortures of the dying clove alone,
Till one uprose among the multitude,
And said—'The flood of time is rolling on.
We stand upon its brink, whilst *they* are gone
To glide in peace down death's mysterious stream.
Have ye done well? They moulder flesh and bone
Who might have made this life's envenomed dream
A sweeter draught than ye will ever taste I deem.

" 'These perish as the good and great of yore
Have perished, and their murderers will repent.
Yes, vain and barren tears shall flow before
Yon smoke has faded from the firmament;
Even for this cause, that ye, who must lament
The death of those that made this world so fair,
Cannot recall them now; but then is lent
To man the wisdom of a high despair
When such can die, and he live on and linger here.

" 'Aye, ye may fear not now the Pestilence,
From fabled hell as by a charm withdrawn;
All power and faith must pass, since calmly hence
In pain and fire have unbelievers gone;
And ye must sadly turn away, and moan
In secret, to his home each one returning;
And to long ages shall this hour be known,
And slowly shall its memory, ever burning,
Fill this dark night of things with an eternal morning.

" 'For me the world is grown too void and cold,
Since hope pursues immortal destiny
With steps thus slow—therefore shall ye behold
How those who love, yet fear not, dare to die.
Tell to your children this!' Then suddenly
He sheathed a dagger in his heart and fell.'
My brain grew dark in death, and yet to me
There came a murmur from the crowd, to tell
Of deep and mighty change which suddenly befell.

"Then suddenly I stood a winged Thought
Before the immortal Senate, and the seat
Of that star-shining spirit, whence is wrought

The strength of its dominion, good and great,
The better Genius of this world's estate.
His realm around one mighty Fane is spread,
Elysian islands bright and fortunate,
Calm dwellings of the free and happy dead,
Where I am sent to lead!" These winged words she said,

And with the silence of her eloquent smile
Bade us embark in her divine canoe;
Then at the helm we took our seat, the while
Above her head those plumes of dazzling hue
Into the winds' invisible stream she threw,
Sitting beside the prow: like gossamer,
On the swift breath of morn, the vessel flew
O'er the bright whirlpools of that fountain fair,
Whose shores receded fast, whilst we seemed lingering ther

Till down that mighty stream, dark, calm, and fleet,
Between a chasm of cedarn mountains riven,
Chased by the thronging winds whose viewless feet,
As swift as twinkling beams, had, under Heaven,
From woods and waves wild sounds and odours driven,
The boat flew visibly.—Three nights and days,
Borne like a cloud thro' morn, and noon, and even,
We sailed along the winding watery ways
Of the vast stream,—a long and labyrinthine maze.

A scene of joy and wonder to behold
That river's shapes and shadows changing ever,
Where the broad sunrise, filled with deepening gold
Its whirlpools, where all hues did spread and quiver,
And where melodious falls did burst and shiver
Among rocks clad with flowers; the foam and spray

Sparkled like stars upon the sunny river,
Or when the moonlight poured a holier day,
One vast and glittering lake around green islands lay.

Morn, noon, and even, that boat of pearl outran
The streams which bore it, like the arrowy cloud
Of tempest, or the speedier thought of man,
Which flieth forth and cannot make abode.
Sometimes thro' forests, deep like night, we glode,
Between the walls of mighty mountains crowned
With Cyclopean piles, whose turrets proud,
The homes of the departed, dimly frowned
O'er the bright waves which girt their dark foundations round.

Sometimes between the wide and flowering meadows,
Mile after mile we sailed, and 'twas delight
To see far off the sunbeams chase the shadows
Over the grass. Sometimes beneath the night
Of wide and vaulted caves, whose roofs were bright
With starry gems, we fled, whilst, from their deep
And dark-green chasms, shades, beautiful and white,
Amid sweet sounds across our path would sweep,
Like swift and lovely dreams that walk the waves of sleep.

And, ever as we sailed, our minds were full
Of love and wisdom, which would overflow
In converse wild, and sweet, and wonderful;
And in quick smiles whose light would come and go,
Like music o'er wide waves, and in the flow
Of sudden tears, and in the mute caress—
For a deep shade was cleft, and we did know
That virtue, tho' obscured on Earth, not less
Survives all mortal change in lasting loveliness.

Three days and nights we sailed, as thought and feeling
Number delightful hours—for thro' the sky
The sphered lamps of day and night, revealing
New changes and new glories, rolled on high,
Sun, Moon, and moonlike lamps, the progeny
Of a diviner Heaven, serene and fair:
On the fourth day, wild as a wind-wrought sea
The stream became, and fast and faster bare
The spirit-winged boat, steadily speeding there.

Steady and swift, where the waves rolled like mountains
Within the vast ravine, whose rifts did pour
Tumultuous floods from their ten thousand fountains,
The thunder of whose earth-uplifting roar
Made the air sweep in whirlwinds from the shore,
Calm as a shade, the boat of that fair child
Securely fled that rapid stress before,
Amid the topmast spray and sunbows wild,
Wreathed in the silver mist: in joy and pride we smiled.

The torrent of that wide and raging river
Is past, and our aërial speed suspended.
We look behind; a golden mist did quiver
When its wild surges with the lake were blended:
Our bark hung there, as one line suspended
Between two heavens, that windless waveless lake;
Which four great cataracts from four vales, attended
By mists, aye feed; from rocks and clouds they break,
And of that azure sea a silent refuge make.

Motionless, resting on the lake awhile,
I saw its marge of snow-bright mountains rear

Their peaks aloft. I saw each radiant isle,
And in the midst, afar, even like a sphere
Hung in one hollow sky, did there appear
The Temple of the Spirit. On the sound
Which issued thence, drawn nearer and more near,
Like the swift moon this glorious earth around,
The charmed boat approached, and there its haven found.

END OF THE REVOLT OF ISLAM.

QUEEN MAB,

WITH NOTES.

BY

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

VERBATIM FROM THE ORIGINAL EDITION.

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1834.

QUEEN MAB,

WITH NOTES.

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TO HARRIET * * * * *

Whose is the love that, gleaming through the world,
Wards off the poisonous arrow of its scorn?
Whose is the warm and partial praise,
Virtue's most sweet reward?

Beneath whose looks did my reviving soul
Riper in truth and virtuous daring grow?
Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on,
And loved mankind the more?

Harriet! on thine:—thou wert my purer mind;
Thou wert the inspiration of my song;
Thine are these early wilding flowers,
Though garlanded by me.

Then press into thy breast this pledge of love,
And know, though time may change and years may roll,
Each flow'ret gathered in my heart
It consecrates to thine.

TO DAGNET

What is the best time, reckoning distance like world,
Between us the pleasures are to be gone?
Is there a time and place [illegible]
Where we may [illegible] together?

[illegible] my [illegible]
Between us [illegible] [illegible]
Is there [illegible] I [illegible] on,
Is there [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
Where [illegible] [illegible] [illegible];

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

QUEEN MAB.

written and published when I was 18 years old.

I.

How wonderful is Death,
Death and his brother Sleep!
One, pale as yonder waning moon
With lips of lurid blue;
The other, rosy as the morn
When throned on ocean's wave
It blushes o'er the world:
Yet both so passing wonderful!

Hath then the gloomy Power
Whose reign is in the tainted sepulchres
Seized on her sinless soul?
Must then that peerless form
Which love and admiration cannot view
Without a beating heart, those azure veins
Which steal like streams along a field of snow,
That lovely outline, which is fair
As breathing marble, perish?
Must putrefaction's breath
Leave nothing of this heavenly sight
But loathsomeness and ruin?
Spare nothing but a gloomy theme,
On which the lightest heart might moralize?
Or is it only a sweet slumber
Stealing o'er sensation,
Which the breath of roseate morning

Chaseth into darkness?
Will Ianthe wake again,
And give that faithful bosom joy
Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
Light, life, and rapture, from her smile?

Yes! she will wake again,
Although her glowing limbs are motionless
And silent those sweet lips,
Once breathing eloquence,
That might have soothed a tiger's rage,
Or thawed the cold heart of a conqueror.
Her dewy eyes are closed,
And on their lids, whose texture fine
Scarce hides the dark blue orbs beneath,
The baby Sleep is pillowed:
Her golden tresses shade
The bosom's stainless pride,
Curling like tendrils of the parasite
Around a marble column.

Hark! whence that rushing sound?
'Tis like the wondrous strain
That round a lonely ruin swells,
Which, wandering on the echoing shore,
The enthusiast hears at evening:
'Tis softer than the west wind's sigh:
'Tis wilder than the unmeasured notes
Of that stange lyre whose strings
The genii of the breezes sweep:
Those lines of rainbow light
Are like the moonbeams when they fall
Through some cathedral window, but the teints

Are such as may not find
Comparison on earth.

Behold the chariot of the Fairy Queen!
Celestial coursers paw the unyielding air;
Their filmy pennons at her word they furl,
And stop obedient to the reins of light:
These the Queen of spells drew in;
She spread a charm around the spot,
And, leaning graceful from the ethereal car,
Long did she gaze, and silently,
Upon the slumbering maid.

Oh! not the visioned poet in his dreams,
When silvery slouds float through the wildered brain,
When every sight of lovely, wild, and grand,
Astonishes, enraptures, elevates,
When fancy at a glance combines
The wondrous and the beautiful,
So bright, so fair, so wild, a shape
Hath ever yet beheld,
As that which reined the coursers of the air,
And poured the magic of her gaze
Upon the maiden's sleep.

The broad and yellow moon
Shone dimly through her form—
That form of faultless symmetry;
The pearly and pellucid car
Moved not the moonlight's line:
'Twas not an earthly pageant.
Those who had looked upon the sight,
Passing all human glory,
Saw not the yellow moon,

Saw not the mortal scene,
Heard not the night-wind's rush,
Heard not an earthly sound,
Saw but the fairy pageant,
Heard but the heavenly strains
That filled the lonely dwelling.

The Fairy's frame was slight; yon fibrous cloud,
That catches but the palest tinge of even,
And which the straining eye can hardly seize
When melting into eastern twilight's shadow,
Were scarce so thin, so slight; but the fair star,
That gems the glittering coronet of morn,
Sheds not a light so mild, so powerful,
As that which, bursting from the Fairy's form,
Spread a perpetual halo round the scene,
Yet with an undulating motion
Swayed to her outline gracefully.

From her celestial car
The Fairy Queen descended,
And thrice she waved her wand,
Circled with wreaths of amaranth:
Her thin and misty form
Moved with the moving air,
And the clear silver tones,
As thus she spoke, were such
As are unheard by all but gifted ear.

Fairy. Stars! your balmiest influence shed!
Elements! your wrath suspend!
Sleep, Ocean, in the rocky bound
That circle thy domain!

Let not a breath be seen to stir
Around yon grass-grown ruin's height;
Let even the restless gossamer
Sleep on the moveless air!
Soul of Ianthe! thou,
Judged alone worthy of the envied boon
That waits the good and the sincere; that waits
Those who have struggled, and with resolute will
Vanquished earth's pride and meanness, burst the chains,
The icy chains of custom, and have shone
The day-stars of their age;—Soul of Ianthe!
Awake! arise!

Sudden arose
Ianthe's Soul! It stood
All beautiful in naked purity,
The perfect semblance of its bodily frame,
Instinct with inexpressible beauty and grace.
Each stain of earthliness
Had passed away: it reassumed
Its native dignity, and stood
Immortal amid ruin.

Upon the couch the body lay
Wrapt in the depth of slumber:
Its features were fixed and meaningless,
Yet animal life was there,
And every organ yet performed
Its natural functions: 'twas a sight
Of wonder to behold the body and soul.
The self-same lineaments, the same
Marks of identity, were there:
Yet, oh, how different! One aspires to heaven,

Pants for its sempiternal heritage,
And, ever changing, ever rising still,
Wantons in endless being.
The other, for a time the unwilling sport
Of circumstance and passion, struggles on;
Fleets through its sad duration rapidly;
Then, like a useless and worn-out machine,
Rots, perishes, and passes.

Fairy. Spirit! who hast dived so deep;
Spirit! who hast soared so high;
Thou the fearless, thou the mild,
Accept the boon thy worth hath earned,
Ascend the car with me.

Spirit. Do I dream? is this new feeling
But a visioned ghost of slumber?
If indeed I am a soul,
A free a disembodied soul,
Speak again to me.

Fairy. I am the Fairy MAB: to me 'tis given
The wonders of the human world to keep:
The secrets of the immeasurable past,
In the unfailing consciences of men,
Those stern unflattering chroniclers, I find:
The future, from the causes which arise
In each event, I gather: not the sting
Which retributive memory implants
In the hard bosom of the selfish man;
Nor that extatic and exulting throb
Which virtue's votary feels when he sums up
The thoughts and actions of a well-spent day,
Are unforeseen, unregistered by me:
And it is yet permitted me, to rend
The veil of mortal frailty, that the spirit,
Clothed in its changeless purity, may know

How soonest to accomplish the great end
For which it hath its being, and may taste
That peace which in the end all life will share.
This is the meed of virtue; happy Soul,
Ascend the car with me!

The chains of earth's immurement
Fell from Ianthe's spirit;
They shrank and brake like bandages of straw
Beneath a wakened giant's strength.
She knew her glorious change,
And felt in apprehension uncontrolled
New raptures opening round:
Each day-dream of her mortal life,
Each frenzied vision of the slumbers
That closed each well-spent day,
Seemed now to meet reality.

The Fairy and the Soul proceeded;
The silver clouds disparted;
And, as the car of magic they ascended,
Again the speechless music swelled,
Again the coursers of the air
Unfurled their azure pennons, and the Queen
Shaking the beamy reins
Bade them pursue their way.
The magic car moved on.
The night was fair, and countless stars
Studded heaven's dark blue vault,—
Just o'er the eastern wave
Peeped the first faint smile of morn:—
The magic car moved on—
From the celestial hoofs

The atmosphere in flaming sparkles flew,
And, where the burning wheels
Eddied above the mountain's loftiest peak,
Was traced a line of lightning.
Now it flew far above a rock,
The utmost verge of earth,
The rival of the Andes, whose dark brow
Lowered o'er the silver sea.

Far, far below the chariot's path,
Calm as a slumbering babe,
Tremendous Ocean lay.
The mirror of its stillness shewed
The pale and waning stars,
The chariot's fiery track,
And the grey light of morn
Tinging those fleecy clouds
That canopied the dawn.
Seemed it, that the chariot's way
Lay through the midst of an immense concave,
Radiant with million constellations, tinged
With shades of infinite colour,
And semicircled with a belt
Flashing incessant meteors.

The magic car moved on.
As they approached their goal
The coursers seemed to gather speed;
The sea no longer was distinguished; earth
Appeared a vast and shadowy sphere;
The sun's unclouded orb
Rolled through the black concave;
Its rays of rapid light

Parted around the chariot's swifter course,
And fell like ocean's feathery spray
Dashed from the boiling surge
Before a vessel's prow.

The magic car moved on.
Earth's distant orb appeared
The smallest light that twinkles in the heaven;
Whilst round the chariot's way
Innumerable systems rolled,
And countless spheres diffused
An ever-varying glory.
It was a sight of wonder: some
Were horned like the crescent moon;
Some shed a mild and silver beam
Like Hesperus o'er the western sea;
Some dash'd athwart with trains of flame,
Like worlds to death and ruin driven;
Some shone like suns, and, as the chariot passed,
Eclipsed all other light.

Spirit of Nature! here!
In this interminable wilderness
Of worlds, at whose immensity
Even soaring fancy staggers,
Here is thy fitting temple.
Yet not the lightest leaf
That quivers to the passing breeze
Is less instinct with thee:
Yet not the meanest worm
That lurks in graves and fattens on the dead
Less shares thy eternal breath.
Spirit of Nature! thou!

Imperishable as this scene,
Here is thy fitting temple.

II.

If solitude hath ever led thy steps
To the wild ocean's echoing shore,
And thou hast lingered there
Until the sun's broad orb
Seemed resting on the burnished wave,
Thou must have marked the lines
Of purple gold, that motionless
Hung o'er the sinking sphere:
Thou must have marked the billowy clouds
Edged with intolerable radiancy,
Towering like rocks of jet
Crowned with a diamond wreath.
And yet there is a moment,
When the sun's highest point
Peeps like a star o'er ocean's western edge,
When those far clouds of feathery gold,
Shaded with deepest purple, gleam
Like islands on a dark blue sea;
Then has thy fancy soared above the earth,
And furled its wearied wing
Within the Fairy's fane.

Yet not the golden islands
Gleaming in yon flood of light,
Nor the feathery curtains
Stretching o'er the sun's bright couch,
Nor the burnished ocean waves

Paving that gorgeous dome,
So fair, so wonderful, a sight
As Mab's ethereal palace could afford.
Yet likest evening's vault, that faëry Hall!
As Heaven, low resting on the wave, it spread
Its floors of flashing light,
Its vast and azure dome,
Its fertile golden islands
Floating on a silver sea;
Whilst suns their mingling beamings darted
Through clouds of circumambient darkness,
And pearly battlements around
Looked o'er the immense of Heaven.

The magic car no longer moved.
The Fairy and the Spirit
Entered the Hall of Spells:
Those golden clouds,
That rolled in glittering billows
Beneath the azure canopy
With the ethereal footsteps, trembled not:
The light and crimson mists,
Floating to strains of thrilling melody
Through that unearthly dwelling,
Yielded to every movement of the will.
Upon their passive swell the Spirit leaned,
And, for the varied bliss that pressed around,
Used not the glorious privilege
Of virtue and of wisdom.

Spirit! the Fairy said,
And pointed to the gorgeous dome,
This is a wondrous sight,

And mocks all human grandeur;
But, were it virtue's only meed to dwell
In a celestial palace, all resigned
To pleasurable impulses, immured
Within the prison of itself, the will
Of changeless nature would be unfulfilled.
Learn to make others happy. Spirit, come!
This is thine high reward:—the past shall rise.
Thou shalt behold the present; I will teach
The secrets of the future.

The Fairy and the Spirit
Approached the overhanging battlement.—
Below lay stretched the universe!
There, far as the remotest line
That bounds imagination's flight,
Countless and unending orbs,
In mazy motion intermingled,
Yet still fulfilled immutably
Eternal nature's law.
Above, below, around,
The circling systems formed
A wilderness of harmony;
Each with undeviating aim,
In eloquent silence, through the depths of space
Pursued its wondrous way.

There was a little light
That twinkled in the misty distance:
None but a spirit's eye
Might ken that rolling orb;
None but a spirit's eye,
And in no other place

But that celestial dwelling, might behold
Each action of this earth's inhabitants.
But matter, space, and time,
In those aerial mansions cease to act:
And all-prevailing wisdom, when it reaps
The harvest of its excellence, o'erbounds
Those obstacles of which an earthly soul
Fears to attempt the conquest.

The Fairy pointed to the earth.
The Spirit's intellectual eye
Its kindred beings recognized.
The thronging thousands, to a passing view,
Seemed like an ant-hill's citizens.
How wonderful! that even
The passions, prejudices, interests,
That sway the meanest being, the weak touch
That moves the finest nerve,
And in one human brain
Causes the faintest thought, becomes a link
In the great chain of nature.

Behold, the Fairy cried,
Palmyra's ruined palaces!—
Behold! where grandeur frowned;
Behold where pleasure smiled;
What now remains?—the memory
Of senselessness and shame—
What is immortal there?
Nothing—it stands to tell
A melancholy tale, to give
An awful warning: soon
Oblivion will steal silently

The remnant of its fame.
Monarchs and conquerors there
Proud o'er prostrate millions trod—
The earthquakes of the human race;
Like them forgotten when the ruin
That marks their shock is past.

Beside the eternal Nile
The Pyramids have risen.
Nile shall pursue his changeless way:
Those pyramids shall fall:
Yea, not a stone shall stand to tell
The spot whereon they stood;
Their very site shall be forgotten,
As is their builder's name!

Behold yon stertile spot,
Where now the wandering Arab's tent
Flaps in the desert-blast,
There once old Salem's haughty fane
Reared high to heaven its thousand golden domes,
And in the blushing face of day
Exposed its shameful glory.
Oh! many a widow, many an orphan, cursed
The building of that fane; and many a father,
Worn out with toil and slavery, implored
The poor man's God to sweep it from the earth,
And spare his children the detested task
Of piling stone on stone, and poisoning
The choicest days of life,
To soothe a dotard's vanity.
There an inhuman and uncultured race
Howled hideous praises to their Demon-God;

They rushed to war, tore from the mother's womb
The unborn child,—old age and infancy
Promiscuous perished; their victorious arms
Left not a soul to breathe. Oh! they were fiends!
But what was he who taught them that the God
Of nature and benevolence had given
A special sanction to the trade of blood?
His name and theirs are fading, and the tales
Of this barbarian nation, which imposture
Recites till terror credits, are pursuing
Itself into forgetfulness.

Where Athens, Rome, and Sparta, stood,
There is a moral desert now:
The mean and miserable huts,
The yet more wretched palaces,
Contrasted with those ancient fanes,
Now crumbling to oblivion;
The long and lonely colonnades,
Through which the ghost of Freedom stalks,
Seem like a well-known tune,
Which, in some dear scene we have loved to hear,
Remembered now in sadness.
But, oh! how much more changed,
How gloomier is the contrast
Of human nature there!
Where Socrates expired, a tyrant's slave,
A coward and a fool, spreads death around—
Then, shuddering, meets his own.
Where Cicero and Antoninus lived,
A cowled and hypocritical monk
Prays, curses, and deceives.

Spirit! ten thousand years
Have scarcely past away,
Since, in the waste where now the savage drinks
His enemy's blood, and, aping Europe's sons,
Wakes the unholy song of war,
Arose a stately city,
Metropolis of the western continent:
There, now, the mossy column-stone,
Indented by time's unrelaxing grasp,
Which once appeared to brave
All, save its country's ruin;
There the wide forest scene,
Rude in the uncultivated loveliness
Of gardens long run wild,
Seems, to the unwilling sojourner, whose steps
Chance in that desert has delayed,
Thus to have stood since earth was what it is.
Yet once it was the busiest haunt,
Whither, as to a common centre, flocked
Strangers, and ships, and merchandize:
Once peace and freedom blest
The cultivated plain:
But wealth, that curse of man,
Blighted the bud of its prosperity:
Virtue and wisdom, truth and liberty,
Fled, to return not, until man shall know
That they alone can give the bliss
Worthy a soul that claims
Its kindred with eternity.

There's not one atom of yon earth
But once was living man;
Nor the minutest drop of rain,
That hangeth in its thinnest cloud,

But flowed in human veins:
And from the burning plains
Where Lybian monsters yell,
From the most gloomy glens
Of Greenland's sunless clime,
To where the golden fields
Of fertile England spread
Their harvest to the day,
Thou canst not find one spot
Whereon no city stood.

How strange is human pride!
I tell thee that those living things,
To whom the fragile blade of grass,
That springeth in the morn
And perisheth ere noon,
Is an unbounded world;
I tell thee that those viewless beings,
Whose mansion is the smallest particle
Of the impassive atmosphere,
Think, feel, and live, like man;
That their affections and antipathies,
Like his, produce the laws
Ruling their moral state;
And the minutest throb,
That through their frame diffuses
The slightest faintest motion,
Is fixed and indispensable
As the majestic laws
That rule yon rolling orbs.

The Fairy paused. The Spirit,
In extacy of admiration, felt

All knowledge of the past revived; the events
Of old and wondrous times,
Which dim tradition interruptedly
Teaches the credulous vulgar, were unfolded
In just perspective to the view,
Yet dim from their infinitude.
The Spirit seemed to stand
High on an isolated pinnacle;
The flood of ages combating below,
The depth of the unbounded universe
Above, and all around
Nature's unchanging harmony.

III.

Fairy! the Spirit said,
And on the Queen of spells
Fixed her ethereal eyes,
I thank thee. Thou hast given
A boon which I will not resign, and taught
A lesson not to be unlearned. I know
The past, and thence I will essay to glean
A warning for the future, so that man
May profit by his errors, and derive
Experience from his folly;
For, when the power of imparting joy
Is equal to the will, the human soul
Requires no other heaven.

Mab. Turn thee, surpassing Spirit!
Much yet remains unscanned.

Thou knowest how great is man,
Thou knowest his imbecility:
Yet learn thou what he is;
Yet learn the lofty destiny
Which restless time prepares
For every living soul.

Behold a gorgeous palace, that, amid
Yon populous city, rears its thousand towers
And seems itself a city. Gloomy troops
Of sentinels, in stern and silent ranks,
Encompass it around: the dweller there
Cannot be free and happy. Hearest thou not
The curses of the fatherless, the groans
Of those who have no friend? He passes on:
The King, the wearer of a gilded chain
That binds his soul to abjectness, the fool
Whom courtiers nickname monarch, whilst a slave
Even to the basest appetites—that man
Heeds not the shriek of penury; he smiles
At the deep curses which the destitute
Mutter in secret, and a sullen joy
Pervades his bloodless heart when thousands groan
But for those morsels which his wantonness
Wastes in unjoyous revelry, to save
All that they love from famine: when he hears
The tale of horror, to some ready-made face
Of hypocritical assents he turns,
Smothering the glow of shame, that, spite of him,
Flushes his bloated cheek.

Now to the meal
Of silence, grandeur, and excess, he drags

His palled unwilling appetite. If gold
Gleaming around, and numerous viands culled
From every clime, could force the loathing sense
To overcome satiety,—if wealth
The spring it draws from poisons not,—or vice
Unfeeling, stubborn vice, converteth not
Its food to deadliest venom,—then that king
Is happy; and the peasant who fulfils
His unforced task, when he returns at even,
And by the blazing faggot meets again
Her welcome for whom all his toil is sped,
Tastes not a sweeter meal.

Behold him now
Stretched on the gorgeous couch; his fevered brain
Reels dizzily awhile: but ah! too soon
The slumber of intemperance subsides,
And conscience, that undying serpent, calls
Her venomous brood to their nocturnal task.
Listen! he speaks! oh! mark that frenzied eye—
Oh! mark that deadly visage.

King. No cessation!
Oh! must this last for ever! Awful death,
I wish yet fear to clasp thee!—Not one moment
Of dreamless sleep! O dear and blessed peace!
Why dost thou shroud thy vestal purity
In penury and dungeons? wherefore lurkest
With danger, death, and solitude; yet shunn'st
The palace I have built thee? Sacred peace!
Oh visit me but once, and pitying shed
One drop of balm upon my withered soul.

Vain man! that palace is the virtuous heart,
And peace defileth not her snowy robes
In such a shed as thine. Hark! yet he mutters;
His slumbers are but varied agonies:
They prey like scorpions on the springs of life.
There needeth not the hell that bigots frame
To punish those who err: earth in itself
Contains at once the evil and the cure;
And all-sufficing nature can chastise
Those who transgress her law;—she only knows
How justly to proportion to the fault
The punishment it merits.

Is it strange
That this poor wretch should pride him in his woe?
Take pleasure in his abjectness, and hug
The scorpion that consumes him? Is it strange
That, placed on a conspicuous throne of thorns,
Grasping an iron sceptre, and immured
Within a splendid prison, whose stern bounds
Shut him from all that's good or dear on earth,
His soul asserts not its humanity?
That man's mild nature rises not in war
Against a king's employ? No—'tis not strange.
He, like the vulgar, thinks, feels, acts, and lives,
Just as his father did; the unconquered powers
Of precedent and custom interpose
Between a *king* and virtue. Stranger yet,
To those who know not nature, nor deduce
The future from the present, it may seem,
That not one slave, who suffers from the crimes
Of this unnatural being; not one wretch,
Whose children famish, and whose nuptial bed

Is earth's unpitying bosom, rears an arm
To dash him from his throne!

Those gilded flies
That, basking in the sunshine of a court,
Fatten on corruption, what are they?
—The drones of the community; they feed
On the mechanic's labour: the starved hind
For them compels the stubborn glebe to yield
Its unshared harvests; and yon squalid form,
Leaner than fleshless misery, that wastes
A sunless life in the unwholesome mine,
Drags out in labour a protracted death,
To glut their grandeur; may faint with toil,
That few may know the cares and woe of sloth.

Whence, thinkest thou, kings and parasites arose?
Whence that unnatural line of drones, who heap
Toil and unvanquishable penury
On those who build their palaces, and bring
Their daily bread?—From vice, black loathsome vice;
From rapine, madness, treachery, and wrong;
From all that genders misery, and makes
Of earth this thorny wilderness; from lust,
Revenge, and murder.....And when reason's voice,
Loud as the voice of nature, shall have waked
The nations, and mankind perceive that vice
Is discord, war, and misery; that virtue
Is peace, and happiness, and harmony;
When man's maturer nature shall disdain
The playthings of its childhood; kingly glare
Will lose its power to dazzle; its authority
Will silently pass by; the gorgeous throne
Shall stand unnoticed in the regal hall,

Fast falling to decay; whilst falsehood's trade
Shall be as hateful and unprofitable
As that of truth is now.

Where is the fame
Which the vain-glorious mighty of the earth
Seek to eternize? Oh! the faintest sound
From time's light footfall, the minutest wave
That swells the flood of ages, whelms in nothing
The unsubstantial bubble. Ay! to day
Stern is the tyrant's mandates, red the gaze
That flashes desolation, strong the arm
That scatters multitudes. To-morrow comes!
That mandate is a thunder-peal that died
In ages past; that gaze, a transient flash
On which the midnight closed, and on that arm
The worm has made his meal.

The virtuous man,
Who, great in his humility as kings
Are little in their grandeur; he who leads
Invincibly a life of resolute good,
And stands amid the silent dungeon-depths
More free and fearless than the trembling judge,
Who, clothed in venal power, vainly strove
To bind the impassive spirit; when he falls,
His mild eye beams benevolence no more:
Withered the hand outstretched but to relieve;
Sunk reason's simple eloquence, that rolled
But to appal the guilty. Yes! the grave
Hath quenched that eye, and death's relentless frost
Withered that arm: but the unfading fame
Which virtue hangs upon its votary's tomb;
The deathless memory of that man whom kings

Call to their mind and tremble ; the remembrance,
With which the happy spirit contemplates
Its well-spent pilgrimage on earth,
Shall never pass away.

Nature rejects the monarch, not the man;
The subject, not the citizen: for kings
And subjects, mutual foes, for ever play
A losing game into each other's hands,
Whose stakes are vice and misery. The man
Of virtuous soul commands not, nor obeys.
Power, like a desolating pestilence,
Pollutes whate'er it touches; and obedience,
Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth,
Make slaves of men, and of the human frame
A mechanized automaton.

When Nero,
High over flaming Rome, with savage joy
Lowered like a fiend, drank with enraptured ear
The shrieks of agonizing death, beheld
The frightful desolation spread, and felt
A new created sense within his soul
Thrill to the sight, and vibrate to the sound,
Thinkest thou his grandeur had not overcome
The force of human kindness? and when Rome,
With one stern blow, hurled not the tyrant down,
Crushed not the arm red with her dearest blood,
Had not submissive abjectness destroyed
Nature's suggestions?

Look on yonder earth:
The golden harvests spring; the unfailing sun
Sheds light and life; the fruits, the flowers, the trees,

Arise in due succession; all things speak
Peace, harmony, and love. The universe,
In nature's silent eloquence, declares
That all fulfil the works of love and joy,—
All but the outcast man. He fabricates
The sword which stabs his peace; he cherisheth
The snakes that gnaw his heart; he raiseth up
The tyrant, whose delight is in his woe,
Whose sport is in his agony. Yon sun,
Lights it the great alone? Yon silver beams,
Sleep they less sweetly on the cottage thatch
Than on the dome of kings? Is mother earth
A step-dame to her numerous sons, who earn
Her unshared gifts with unremitting toil;
A mother only to those puling babes
Who, nursed in ease and luxury, make men
The playthings of their babyhood, and mar,
In self-important childishness, that peace
Which men alone appreciate?
Spirit of Nature! no.
The pure diffusion of thy essence throbs
Alike in every human heart.
Thou, aye, erectest there
Thy throne of power unappealable:
Thou art the judge beneath whose nod
Man's brief and frail authority
Is powerless as the wind
That passeth idly by.
Thine the tribunal which surpasseth
The show of human justice,
As God surpasses man.
Spirit of Nature! thou
Life of interminable multitudes;
Soul of those mighty spheres

Whose changeless paths thro' Heaven's deep silence lie;
Soul of that smallest being,
The dwelling of whose life
Is one faint April sun-gleam;—
Man, like these passive things,
Thy will unconsciously fulfilleth:
Like theirs, his age of endless peace,
Will swiftly, surely come;
And the unbounded frame, which thou pervadest,
Will be without a flaw
Marring its perfect symmetry.

IV.

How beautiful this night! The balmiest sigh,
Which vernal zephyrs breathe in evening's ear,
Were discord to the speaking quietude
That wraps this moveless scene. Heaven's ebon vault,
Studded with stars unutterably bright,
Thro' which the moon's unclouded grandeur rolls,
Seems like a canopy which love had spread
To curtain her sleeping world. Yon gentle hills,
Robed in a garment of untrodden snow;
Yon darksome rocks, whence icicles depend,
So stainless, that their white and glittering spires
Tinge not the moon's pure beam; yon castled steep,
Whose banner hangeth o'er the time-worn tower
So idly that rapt fancy deemeth it
A metaphor of peace;—all form a scene
Where musing solitude might love to lift
Her soul above this sphere of earthliness;

Where silence undisturbed might watch alone,
So cold, so bright, so still.
The orb of day,
In southern climes, o'er ocean's waveless field
Sinks sweetly smiling: not the faintest breath
Steals o'er the unruffled deep; the clouds of eve
Reflect unmoved the lingering beam of day;
And vesper's image on the western main
Is beautifully still. To-morrow comes:
Cloud upon cloud, in dark and deepening mass,
Roll o'er the blackened waters; the deep roar
Of distant thunder mutters awfully;
Tempest unfolds its pinion o'er the gloom
That shrouds the boiling surge; the pityless fiend,
With all his winds and lightnings, tracks his prey;
The torn deep yawns,—the vessel finds a grave
Beneath its jagged gulf.

Ah! whence yon glare
That fires the arch of heaven?—that dark red smoke
Blotting the silver moon? The stars are quenched
In darkness, and the pure and spangling snow
Gleams faintly through the gloom that gathers round
Hark to that roar, whose swift and deaf'ning peals
In countless echoes through the mountains ring,
Startling pale midnight on her starry throne!
Now swells the intermingling din; the jar
Frequent and frightful of the bursting bomb;
The falling beam, the shriek, the groan, the shout,
The ceaseless clangor, and the rush of men
Inebriate with rage:—loud, and more loud
The discord grows; till pale death shuts the scene,
And o'er the conqueror and the conquered draws
His cold and bloody shroud.—Of all the men

Whom day's departing beam saw blooming there
In proud and vigorous health, of all the hearts
That beat with anxious life at sun-set there,
How few survive, how few are beating now!
All in deep silence, like the fearful calm
That slumbers in the storm's portentous pause,
Save when the frantic wail of widowed love
Comes shuddering on the blast, or the faint moan
With which some soul bursts from the frame of clay
Wrapt round its struggling powers.

The grey morn
Dawns on the mournful scene; the sulphurous smoke
Before the icy wind slow rolls away,
And the bright beams of frosty morning dance
Along the spangling snow. There tracks of blood
Even to the forest's depth, and scattered arms,
And lifeless warriors, whose hard lineaments
Death's self could change not, mark the dreadful path
Of the outsallying victors: far behind,
Black ashes note where their proud city stood
Within yon forest is a gloomy glen—
Each tree, which guards its darkness from the day,
Waves o'er a warrior's tomb.

I see thee shrink,
Surpassing Spirit!—wert thou human else?
I see a shade of doubt and horror fleet
Across thy stainless features: yet fear not.
This is no unconnected misery,
Nor stands uncaused, and irretrievable.
Man's evil nature, that apology
Which kings who rule, and cowards who crouch, set up

For their unnumbered crimes, sheds not the blood
Which desolates the discord-wasted land.
From kings, and priests, and statesmen, war aros
Whose safety is man's deep embittered woe,
Whose grandeur his debasement. Let the axe
Strike at the root, the poison-tree will fall;
And, where its venomed exhalations spread
Ruin, and death, and woe, where millions lay
Quenching the serpent's famine, and their bones
Bleaching unburied in the putrid blast,
A garden shall arise, in loveliness
Surpassing fabled Eden.

Hath Nature's soul
(That formed this world so beautiful, that spread
Earth's lap with plenty, and life's smallest chord
Strung to unchanging unison, that gave
The happy birds their dwelling in the grove,
That yielded to the wanderers of the deep
The lovely silence of the unfathomed main,
And filled the meanest worm that crawls in dust
With spirit, thought, and love) on Man alone,
Partial in causeless malice, wantonly
Heaped ruin, vice, and slavery; his soul
Blasted with withering curses; placed afar
The meteor-happiness, that shuns his grasp,
But, serving on the frightful gulph to glare,
Rent wide beneath his footsteps?

Nature! — no!
Kings, priests, and statesmen, blast the human flower
Even in its tender bud; their influence darts
Like subtle poison through the bloodless veins

Of desolate society. The child,
Ere he can lisp his mother's sacred name,
Swells with the unnatural pride of crime, and lifts
His baby-sword even in a hero's mood.
This infant arm becomes the bloodiest scourge
Of devasted earth; whilst specious names,
Learnt in soft childhood's unsuspecting hour,
Serve as the sophisms with which manhood dims
Bright reason's ray, and sanctifies the sword
Upraised to shed a brother's innocent blood.
Let priest-led slaves cease to proclaim that man
Inherits vice and misery, when force
And falsehood hang even o'er the cradled babe,
Stifling with rudest grasp all natural good.

Ah! to the stranger-soul, when first it peeps
From its new tenement, and looks abroad
For happiness and sympathy, how stern
And desolate a tract is this wide world!
How withered all the buds of natural good!
No shade, no shelter, from the sweeping storms
Of pityless power! On its wretched frame,
Poisoned, perchance, by the disease and woe
Heaped on the wretched parent whence it sprung
By morals, law, and custom, the pure winds
Of heaven, that renovate the insect tribes,
May breathe not. The untainting light of day
May visit not its longings. It is bound
Ere it has life: yea, all the chains are forged
Long ere its being: all liberty and love
And peace is torn from its defencelessness;
Cursed from its birth, even from its cradle doomed
To abjectness and bondage!

Throughout this varied and eternal world
Soul is the only element, the block
That for uncounted ages has remained.
The moveless pillar of a mountain's weight
Is active living spirit. Every grain
Is sentient both in unity and part,
And the minutest atom comprehends
A world of loves and hatreds; these beget
Evil and good: hence truth and falsehood spring;
Hence will and thought and action, all the germs
Of pain or pleasure, sympathy or hate,
That variegate the eternal universe.
Soul is not more polluted than the beams
Of heaven's pure orb, ere round their rapid lines
The taint of earth-born atmospheres arise.
Man is of soul and body, formed for deeds
Of high resolve, on fancy's boldest wing
To soar unwearied, fearlessly to turn
The keenest pangs to peacefulness, and taste
The joys which mingled sense and spirit yield.
Or he is formed for abjectness and woe,
To grovel on the dunghill of his fears,
To shrink at every sound, to quench the flame
Of natural love in sensualism, to know
That hour as blest when on his worthless days
The frozen hand of death shall set its seal,
Yet fear the cure, though hating the disease.
The one is man that shall hereafter be;
The other, man as vice has made him now.

War is the statesman's game, the priest's delight,
The lawyer's jest, the hired assassin's trade,
And, to those royal murderers, whose mean thrones

Are bought by crimes of treachery and gore,
The bread they eat, the staff on which they lean.
Guards, garbed in blood-red livery, surround
Their palaces, participate the crimes
That force defends, and from a nation's rage
Secure the crown, which all the curses reach
That famine, frenzy, woe, and penury, breathe.
These are the hired bravos who defend
The tyrant's throne—the bullies of his fear:
These are the sinks and channels of worst vice,
The refuse of society, the dregs
Of all that is most vile: their cold hearts blend
Deceit with sternness, ignorance with pride,
All that is mean and villanous with rage
Which hopelessness of good and self-contempt
Alone might kindle; they are decked in wealth,
Honour, and power, then are sent abroad
To do their work. The pestilence that stalks
In gloomy triumph through some eastern land
Is less destroying. They cajole with gold,
And promises of fame, the thoughtless youth
Already crushed with servitude: he knows
His wretchedness too late, and cherishes
Repentance for his ruin, when his doom
Is sealed in gold and blood!
Those too the tyrant serve, who, skilled to snare
The feet of justice in the toils of law,
Stand ready to oppress the weaker still;
And, right or wrong, will vindicate for gold,
Sneering at public virtue, which beneath
Their pityless tread lies torn and trampled, where
Honour sits smiling at the sale of truth.

Then grave and hoary-headed hypocrites,
Without a hope, a passion, or a love,
Who, through a life of luxury and lies,
Have crept by flattery to the seats of power,
Support the system whence their honours flow....
They have three words: well tyrants know their use,
Well pay them for the loan, with usury
Torn from a bleeding world!—God, Hell, and Heaven.
A vengeful, pityless, and almighty fiend,
Whose mercy is a nick-name for the rage
Of tameless tigers hungering for blood.
Hell, a red gulf of everlasting fire,
Where poisonous and undying worms prolong
Eternal misery to those hapless slaves
Whose life has been a penance for its crimes.
And Heaven, a meed for those who dare belie
Their human nature, quake, believe, and cringe
Before the mockeries of earthly power.

These tools the tyrant tempers to his work,
Wields in his wrath, and as he wills destroys,
Omnipotent in wickedness: the while
Youth springs, age moulders, manhood tamely does
His bidding, bribed by short-lived joys to lend
Force to the weakness of his trembling arm.

They rise, they fall: one generation comes
Yielding its harvest to destruction's scythe.
It fades, another blossoms: yet, behold!
Red glows the tyrant's stamp-mark on its bloom,
Withering and cankering deep its passive prime.
He has invented lying words and modes,
Empty and vain as his own coreless heart;

Evasive meanings, nothings of much sound,
To lure the heedless victim to the toils
Spread round the valley of its paradise.

Look to thyself, priest, conqueror, or prince!
Whether thy trade is falsehood, and thy lusts
Deep wallow in the earnings of the poor,
With whom thy master was; or thou delight'st
In numbering o'er the myriads of thy slain,
All misery weighing nothing in the scale
Against thy short-lived fame; or thou dost load
With cowardice and crime the groaning land,
A pomp-fed king—look to thy wretched self!
Ay, art thou not the veriest slave that e'er
Crawled on the loathing earth? Are not thy days
Days of unsatisfying listlessness?
Dost thou not cry, ere night's long rack is o'er,
When will the morning come? Is not thy youth
A vain and feverish dream of sensualism?
Thy manhood blighted with unripe disease?
Are not thy views of unregretted death
Drear, comfortless, and horrible? Thy mind,
Is it not morbid as thy nerveless frame,
Incapable of judgment, hope, or love?
And dost thou wish the errors to survive
That bar thee from all sympathies of good,
After the miserable interest
Thou hold'st in their protraction? When the grave
Has swallowed up thy memory and thyself,
Dost thou desire the bane that poisons earth
To twine its roots around thy coffined clay,
Spring from thy bones, and blossom on thy tomb,
That of its fruit thy babes may eat and die?

V.

Thus do the generations of the earth
Go to the grave, and issue from the womb,
Surviving still the imperishable change
That renovates the world; even as the leaves
Which the keen frost-wind of the waning year
Has scattered on the forest soil, and heaped
For many seasons there, though long they choke,
Loading with loathsome rottenness the land,
All germs of promise. Yet, when the tall trees
From which they fell, shorn of their lovely shapes,
Lie level with the earth to moulder there,
They fertilize the land they long deformed,
Till from the breathing lawn a forest springs
Of youth, integrity, and loveliness,
Like that which gave it life, to spring and die.
Thus suicidal selfishness, that blights
The fairest feelings of the opening heart,
Is destined to decay, whilst from the soil
Shall spring all virtue, all delight, all love,
And judgment cease to wage unnatural war
With passion's unsubduable array.

Twin-sisters of religion, Selfishness!
Rival in crime and falsehood, aping all
The wanton horrors of her bloody play;
Yet frozen, unimpassioned, spiritless,
Shunning the light, and owning not its name;
Compelled, by its deformity, to screen
With flimsy veil of justice and of right

Its unattractive lineaments, that scare
All, save the brood of ignorance: at once
The cause and the effect of tyranny;
Unblushing, hardened, sensual, and vile;
Dead to all love but of its abjectness,
With heart impassive by more noble powers
Than unshared pleasure, sordid gain, or fame;
Despising its own miserable being,
Which still it longs yet fears to disenthral.

Hence commerce springs, the venal interchange
Of all that human heart or nature yields;
Which wealth should purchase not, but want demand,
And natural kindness hasten to supply
From the full fountain of its boundless love,
For ever stifled, drained, and tainted now.
Commerce! beneath whose poison-breathing shade
No solitary virtue dares to spring,
But poverty and wealth with equal hand
Scatter their withering curses, and unfold
The doors of premature and violent death
To pining famine and full-fed disease,
To all that shares the lot of human life,
Which poisoned body and soul scarce drags the chain
That lengthens as it goes, and clanks behind.

Commerce has set the mark of selfishness,
The signet of its all-enslaving power
Upon a shining ore, and called it gold;
Before whose image bow the vulgar great,
The vainly rich, the miserable proud,
The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and kings,
And with blind feelings reverence the power

That grinds them to the dust of misery.
But in the temple of their hireling hearts
Gold is a living god, and rules in scorn
All earthly things but virtue.

Since tyrants, by the sale of human life,
Heap luxuries to their sensualism, and fame
To their wide-wasting and insatiate pride,
Success has sanctioned to a credulous world
The ruin, the disgrace, the woe, of war.
His hosts of blind and unresisting dupes
The despot numbers; from his cabinet
These puppets of his schemes he moves at will,
Even as the slaves by force or famine driven,
Beneath a vulgar master, to perform
A task of cold and brutal drudgery;—
Hardened to hope, insensible to fear,
Scarce living pullies of a dead machine,
Mere wheels of work and articles of trade,
That grace the proud and noisy pomp of wealth!

The harmony and happiness of man
Yield to the wealth of nations; that which lifts
His nature to the heaven of its pride
Is bartered for the poison of his soul;
The weight that drags to earth his towering hopes,
Blighting all prospect but of selfish gain,
Withering all passion but of slavish fear,
Extinguishing all free and generous love
Of enterprise and daring; even the pulse
That fancy kindles in the beating heart
To mingle with sensation, it destroys,—
Leaves nothing but the sordid lust of self,

. The groveling hope of interest and gold,
Unqualified, unmingled, unredeemed
Even by hypocrisy.

And statesmen boast
Of wealth! The wordy eloquence that lives
After the ruin of their hearts can gild
The bitter poison of a nation's woe,
Can turn the worship of the servile mob
To their corrupt and glaring idol fame,
From virtue, trampled by its iron tread,
Although its dazzling pedestal be raised
Amid the horrors of a limb-strewn field,
With desolated dwellings smoking round.
The man of ease, who, by his warm fire-side,
To deeds of charitable intercourse
And bare fulfilment of the common laws
Of decency and prejudice, confines
The struggling nature of his human heart,
Is duped by their cold sophistry; he sheds
A passing tear perchance upon the wreck
Of earthly peace, when near his dwelling's door
The frightful waves are driven,—when his son
Is murdered by the tyrant, or religion
Drives his wife raving mad. But the poor man,
Whose life is misery, and fear, and care;
Whom the morn wakens but to fruitless toil;
Who ever hears his famished offspring scream,
Whom their pale mother's uncomplaining gaze
For ever meets, and the proud rich man's eye
Flashing command, and the heart-breaking scene
Of thousands like himself;—he little heeds
The rhetoric of tyranny; his hate
Is quenchless as his wrongs; he laughs to scorn

The vain and bitter mockery of words,
Feeling the horror of the tyrant's deeds,
And unrestrained but by the arm of power,
That knows and dreads his enmity.
The iron rod of penury still compels
Her wretched slave to bow the knee to wealth,
And poison, with unprofitable toil,
A life too void of solace to confirm
The very chains that bind him to his doom.
Nature, impartial in munificence,
Has gifted man with all-subduing will.
Matter, with all its transitory shapes,
Lies subjected and plastic at his feet,
That, weak from bondage, tremble as they tread.
How many a rustic Milton has past by,
Stifling the speechless longings of his heart,
In unremitting drudgery and care!
How many a vulgar Cato has compelled
His energies, no longer tameless then,
To mould a pin, or fabricate a nail!
How many a Newton, to whose passive ken
Those mighty spheres that gem infinity
Were only specks of tinsel, fixed in heaven
To light the midnights of his native town!

Yet every heart contains perfection's germ:
The wisest of the sages of the earth,
That ever from the stores of reason drew
Science and truth, and virtue's dreadless tone,
Were but a weak and inexperienced boy,
Proud, sensual, unimpassioned, unimbued
With pure desire and universal love,
Compared to that high being, of cloudless brain,

Untainted passion, elevated will,
Which death (who even would linger long in awe
Within his noble presence, and beneath
His changeless eyebeam) might alone subdue.
Him, every slave now dragging through the filth
Of some corrupted city his sad life,
Pining with famine, swoln with luxury,
Blunting the keenness of his spiritual sense
With narrow schemings and unworthy cares,
Or madly rushing through all violent crime,
To move the deep stagnation of his soul,—
Might imitate and equal.

But mean lust
Has bound its chains so tight around the earth,
That all within it but the virtuous man
Is venal. Gold or fame will surely reach
The price prefixed by selfishness, to all
But him of resolute and unchanging will;
Whom, nor the plaudits of a servile crowd,
Nor the vile joys of tainting luxury,
Can bribe to yield his elevated soul
To tyranny or falsehood, though they wield
With blood-red hand the sceptre of the world.

All things are sold: the very light of heaven
Is venal; earth's unsparing gifts of love,
The smallest and most despicable things
That lurk in the abysses of the deep,
All objects of our life, even life itself,
And the poor pittance which the laws allow
Of liberty, the fellowship of man,
Those duties which his heart of human love
Should urge him to perform instinctively,

Are bought and sold as in a public mart
Of undisguising selfishness, that sets
On each its price, the stamp-mark of her reign.
Even love is sold; the solace of all woe
Is turned to deadliest agony, old age
Shivers in selfish beauty's loathing arms,
And youth's corrupted impulses prepare
A life of horror from the blighting bane
Of commerce; whilst the pestilence that springs
From unenjoying sensualism has filled
All human life with hydra-headed woes.

Falsehood demands but gold to pay the pangs
Of outraged conscience; for the slavish priest
Sets no great value on his hireling faith:
A little passing pomp, some servile souls,
Whom cowardice itself might safely chain,
Or the spare mite of avarice could bribe
To deck the triumph of their languid zeal,
Can make him minister to tyranny.
More daring crime requires a loftier meed.
Without a shudder, the slave-soldier lends
His arm to murderous deeds, and steels his heart,
When the dread eloquence of dying men,
Low mingling on the lonely field of fame,
Assails that nature whose applause he sells
For the gross blessings of a patriot mob,
For the vile gratitude of heartless kings,
And for a cold world's good word,—viler still!
There is a nobler glory, which survives
Until our being fades, and, solacing
All human care, accompanies its change;
Deserts not virtue in the dungeon's gloom,
And, in the precincts of the palace, guides

Its footsteps through that labyrinth of crime;
Imbues his lineaments with dauntlessness,
Even when, from power's avenging hand, he takes
Its sweetest, last, and noblest, title—death;—
The consciousness of good, which neither gold,
Nor sordid fame, nor hope of heavenly bliss,
Can purchase; but a life of resolute good,
Unalterable will, quenchless desire
Of universal happiness, the heart
That beats with it in unison, the brain,
Whose ever wakeful wisdom toils to change
Reason's rich stores for its eternal weal.

This commerce of sincerest virtue needs
No mediative signs of selfishness,
No jealous intercourse of wretched gain,
No balancings of prudence, cold and long.
In just and equal measure all is weighed;
One scale contains the sum of human weal,
And one the good man's heart.

How vainly seek
The selfish for that happiness denied
To aught but virtue? Blind and hardened, they
Who hope for peace amid the storms of care,
Who covet power they know not how to use,
And sigh for pleasure they refuse to give,
Madly they frustrate still their own designs;
And, where they hope that quiet to enjoy
Which virtue pictures, bitterness of soul,
Pining regrets, and vain repentances,
Disease, disgust, and lassitude, pervade
Their valueless and miserable lives.

But hoary-headed selfishness has felt
Its death-blow, and is tottering to the grave:
A brighter morn awaits the human day,
When every transfer of earth's natural gifts
Shall be a commerce of good words and works;
When poverty and wealth, the thirst of fame,
The fear of infamy, disease, and woe,
War with its million horrors, and fierce hell,
Shall live but in the memory of time,
Who, like a penitent libertine, shall start,
Look back, and shudder at his younger years.

VI.

All touch, all eye, all ear,
The Spirit felt the Fairy's burning speech.
O'er the thin texture of its frame
The varying periods painted changing glows,
As on a summer even,
When soul-enfolding music floats around,
The stainless mirror of the lake
Re-images the eastern gloom,
Mingling convulsively its purple hues
With sunset's burnished gold.

Then thus the Spirit spoke:
It is a wild and miserable world!
Thorny, and full of care,
Which every fiend can make his prey at will.
O Fairy! in the lapse of years,

Is there no hope in store?
Will yon vast suns roll on
Interminably, still illuming
The night of so many wretched souls,
And see no hope for them?
Will not the universal Spirit e'er
Revivify this withered limb of Heaven?

The Fairy calmly smiled
In comfort, and a kindling gleam of hope
Suffused the Spirit's lineaments.
Oh! rest thee tranquil; chase those fearful doubts,
Which ne'er could rack an everlasting soul,
That sees the chains which bind it to its doom.
Yes! crime and misery are in yonder earth,
Falsehood, mistake, and lust;
But the eternal world
Contains at once the evil and the cure.
Some eminent in virtue shall start up,
Even in perversest time:
The truths of their pure lips, that never die,
Shall bind the scorpion falsehood with a wreath
Of ever-living flame,
Until the monster sting itself to death.
How sweet a scene will earth become!
Of purest spirits, a pure dwelling-place,
Symphonious with the planetary spheres;
When man, with changeless nature coalescing,
Will undertake regeneration's work,
When its ungenial poles no longer point
To the red and baleful sun
That faintly twinkles there,

Spirit! on yonder earth,
Falsehood now triumphs; deadly power
Has fixed its seal upon the lip of truth!
Madness and misery are there!
The happiest is most wretched! Yet confide,
Until pure health-drops, from the cup of joy,
Fall like a dew of balm upon the world.
Now, to the scene I shew, in silence turn,
And read the blood-stained charter of all woe,
Which nature soon, with recreating hand,
Will blot in mercy from the book of earth.
How bold the flight of passion's wandering wing,
How swift the step of reason's firmer tread,
How calm and sweet the victories of life,
How terrorless the triumph of the grave!
How powerless were the mightiest monarch's arm,
Vain his loud threat, and impotent his frown!
How ludicrous the priest's dogmatic roar!
The weight of his exterminating curse,
How light! and his affected charity,
To suit the pressure of the changing times,
What palpable deceit!—but for thy aid,
Religion! but for thee, prolific fiend,
Who peoplest earth with demons, hell with men,
And heaven with slaves!

Thou taintest all thou lookest upon!—The stars,
Which on thy cradle beamed so brightly sweet,
Were gods to the distempered playfulness
Of thy untutored infancy: the trees,
The grass, the clouds, the mountains, and the sea,
All living things that walk, swim, creep, or fly,
Were gods: the sun had homage, and the moon

Her worshiper. Then thou becamest a boy,
More daring in thy frenzies: every shape,
Monstrous or vast, or beautifully wild,
Which, from sensation's relics, fancy culls;
The spirits of the air, the shuddering ghost,
The genii of the elements, the powers
That give a shape to nature's varied works,
Had life and place in the corrupt belief
Of thy blind heart: yet still thy youthful hands
Were pure of human blood. Then manhood gave
Its strength and ardour to thy frenzied brain;
Thine eager gaze scanned the stupendous scene,
Whose wonders mocked the knowledge of thy pride:
Their everlasting and unchanging laws
Reproached thine ignorance. Awhile thou stood'st
Baffled and gloomy; then thou didst sum up
The elements of all that thou didst know;
The changing seasons, winter's leafless reign,
The budding of the heaven-breathing trees,
The eternal orbs that beautify the night,
The sun-rise, and the setting of the moon,
Earthquakes and wars, and poisons and disease,
And all their causes, to an abstract point,
Converging, thou didst bend, and called it GOD!
The self-sufficing, the omnipotent,
The merciful, and the avenging, GOD!
Who, prototype of human misrule, sits
High in heaven's realm, upon a golden throne,
Even like an earthly king; and whose dread work,
Hell, gapes for ever for the unhappy slaves
Of fate, whom he created in his sport,
To triumph in their torments when they fell!
Earth heard the name; earth trembled, as the smoke
Of his revenge ascended up to heaven,

Blotting the constellations: and the cries
Of millions, butchered in sweet confidence
And unsuspecting peace, even when the bonds
Of safety were confirmed by wordy oaths
Sworn in his dreadful name, rung through the land;
Whilst innocent babes writhed on thy stubborn spear,
And thou didst laugh to hear the mother's shriek
Of maniac gladness, as the sacred steel
Felt cold in her torn entrails!

Religion! thou wert then in manhood's prime;
But age crept on: one God would not suffice
For senile puerility; thou framed'st
A tale to suit thy dotage, and to glut
Thy misery-thirsting soul, that the mad fiend
Thy wickedness had pictured might afford
A plea for sating the unnatural thirst
For murder, rapine, violence, and crime,
That still consumed thy being, even when
Thou heard'st the step of fate:—that flames might light
Thy funeral scene, and the shrill horrent shrieks
Of parents dying on the pile that burned
To light their children to thy paths, the roar
Of the encircling flames, the exulting cries
Of thine apostles, loud commingling there,
Might sate thy hungry ear
Even on the bed of death!

But now contempt is mocking thy grey hairs;
Thou art descending to the darksome grave,
Unhonored and unpitied, but by those
Whose pride is passing by like thine, and sheds,
Like thine, a glare that fades before the sun

Of truth, and shines but in the dreadful night
That long has lowered above the ruined world.

Throughout these infinite orbs of mingling light,
Of which yon earth is one, is wide diffused
A spirit of activity and life,
That knows no term, cessation, nor decay;
That fades not when the lamp of earthly life,
Extinguished in the dampness of the grave,
Awhile there slumbers, more than when the babe
In the dim newness of its being feels
The impulses of sublunary things,
And all is wonder to unpractised sense:
But, active, stedfast, and eternal, still
Guides the fierce whirlwind, in the tempest roars,
Cheers in the day, breathes in the balmy groves,
Strengthens in health, and poisons in disease;
And in the storm of change, that ceaselessly
Rolls round the eternal universe, and shakes
Its undecaying battlement, presides,
Apportioning with irresistible law
The place each spring of its machine shall fill;
So that, when waves on waves tumultuous heap
Confusion to the clouds, and fiercely driven
Heaven's lightnings scorch the uprooted ocean-fords,
Whilst, to the eye of shipwrecked mariner,
Lone sitting on the bare and shuddering rock,
All seems unlinked contingency and chance;
No atom of this turbulence fulfils
A vague and unnecessitated task,
Or acts but as it must and ought to act.
Even the minutest molecule of light,
That in an April sunbeam's fleeting glow
Fulfils its destined though invisible work,

The universal Spirit guides; nor less,
When merciless ambition, or mad zeal,
Has led two hosts of dupes to battle-field,
That, blind, they there may dig each other's graves,
And call the sad work glory, does it rule
All passions: not a thought, a will, an act,
No working of the tyrant's moody mind,
Nor one misgiving of the slaves who boast
Their servitude, to hide the shame they feel,
Nor the events enchaining every will,
That from the depths of unrecorded time
Have drawn all-influencing virtue, pass
Unrecognised or unforeseen by thee,
Soul of the Universe! eternal spring
Of life and death, of happiness and woe,
Of all that chequers the phantasmal scene
That floats before our eyes in wavering light,
Which gleams but on the darkness of our prison,
Whose chains and massy walls
We feel, but cannot see.

Spirit of Nature! all-sufficing Power,
Necessity! thou mother of the world!
Unlike the God of human error, thou
Requirest no prayers nor praises. The caprice
Of man's weak will belongs no more to thee
Than do the changeful passions of his breast
To thy unvarying harmony: the slave,
Whose horrible lusts spread misery o'er the world,
And the good man, who lifts with virtuous pride
His being, in the sight of happiness,
That springs from his own works; the poison-tree,
Beneath whose shade all life is withered up,
And the fair oak, whose leafy dome affords

A temple where the vows of happy love
Are registered, are equal in thy sight.
No love, no hate thou cherishest; revenge,
And favouritism, and worst desire of fame,
Thou knowest not: all that the wide world contains
Are but thy passive instruments, and thou
Regard'st them all with an impartial eye,
Whose joy or pain thy nature cannot feel,
Because thou hast not human sense,
Because thou art not human mind.

Yes! when the sweeping storm of time
Has sung its death-dirge o'er the ruined fanes
And broken altars of the almighty fiend
Whose name usurps thy honours, and the blood,
Through centuries clotted there, has floated down
The tainted flood of ages, shalt thou live
Unchangeable! A shrine is raised to thee,
Which, nor the tempest breath of time,
Nor the interminable flood
Over earth's slight pageant rolling,
Availeth to destroy,—
The sensitive extension of the world.
That wondrous and eternal fane,
Where pain and pleasure, good and evil, join
To do the will of strong necessity,
And life, in multitudinous shapes,
Still pressing forward where no term can be,
Like hungry and unresting flame
Curls round the eternal columns of its strength.

VII.

Spirit. I was an infant when my mother went
To see an atheist burned. She took me there:
The dark-robed priests were met around the pile;
The multitude was gazing silently;
And, as the culprit passed with dauntless mien,
Tempered disdain in his unaltering eye,
Mixed with a quiet smile, shone calmly forth:
The thirsty fire crept round his manly limbs;
His resolute eyes were scorched to blindness soon;
His death-pang rent my heart! The insensate mob
Uttered a cry of triumph, and I wept.
Weep not, child! cried my mother, for that man
Has said, There is no God.

Fairy. There is no God!
Nature confirms the faith his death-groan sealed.
Let heaven and earth, let man's revolving race,
His ceaseless generations, tell their tale;
Let every part depending on the chain
That links it to the whole, point to the hand
That grasps its term! Let every seed that falls
In silent eloquence unfold its store
Of argument. Infinity within,
Infinity without, belie creation;
The exterminable spirit it contains
Is nature's only God; but human pride
Is skilful to invent most serious names
To hide its ignorance.

The name of God
Has fenced about all crime with holiness,
Himself the creature of his worshipers,

Whose names and attributes and passions change,
Seeva, Buddh, Foh, Jehovah, God, or Lord,
Even with the human dupes who build his shrines,
Still serving o'er the war-polluted world
For desolation's watch-word; whether hosts
Stain his death-blushing chariot wheels, as on
Triumphantly they roll, whilst Brahmins raise
A sacred hymn to mingle with the groans;
Or countless partners of his power divide
His tyranny to weakness; or the smoke
Of burning towns, the cries of female helplessness,
Unarmed old age, and youth, and infancy,
Horribly massacred, ascend to heaven
In honour of his name; or, last and worst,
Earth groans beneath religion's iron age,
And priests dare babble of a God of peace,
Even whilst their hands are red with guiltless blood,
Murdering the while, uprooting every germ
Of truth, exterminating, spoiling, all,
Making the earth a slaughter-house!

O Spirit! through the sense
By which thy inner nature was apprised
Of outward shows, vague dreams have rolled,
And varied reminiscences have waked
Tablets that never fade.
All things have been imprinted there,
The stars, the sea, the earth, the sky,
Even the unshapeliest lineaments
Of wild and fleeting visions
Have left a record there
To testify of earth.
These are my empire, for to me is given

The wonders of the human world to keep,
And fancy's thin creations to endow
With manner, being, and reality;
Therefore a wondrous phantom, from the dreams
Of human error's dense and purblind faith,
I will evoke, to meet thy questioning.
Ahasuerus, rise!

A strange and woe-worn wight
Arose beside the battlement,
And stood unmoving there.
His inessential figure cast no shade
Upon the golden floor;
His port and mien bore mark of many years,
And chronicles of untold ancientness
Were legible within his beamless eye;
Yet his cheek bore the mark of youth.
Freshness and vigour knit his manly frame;
The wisdom of old age was mingled there
With youth's primæval dauntlessness;
And inexpressible woe,
Chastened by fearless resignation, gave
An awful grace to his all-speaking brow.
Spirit. Is there a God?
Ahasuerus. Is there a God!—ay, an almighty God,
And vengeful as almighty! Once his voice
Was heard on earth: earth shuddered at the sound.
The fiery-visaged firmament expressed
Abhorrence, and the grave of nature yawned
To swallow all the dauntless and the good
That dared to hurl defiance at his throne,
Girt as it was with power. None but slaves
Survived,—cold-blooded slaves, who did the work

Of tyrannous omnipotence; whose souls
No honest indignation ever urged
To elevated daring, to one deed
Which gross and sensual self did not pollute.
These slaves built temples for the omnipotent fiend,
Gorgeous and vast: the costly altars smoked
With human blood, and hideous pæans rung
Through all the long-drawn aisles. A murderer heard
His voice in Egypt, one whose gifts and arts
Had raised him to his eminence in power,
Accomplice of omnipotence in crime,
And confidant of the all-knowing one.
These were Jehovah's words.

From an eternity of idleness
I, God, awoke; in seven days' toil made earth
From nothing; rested, and created man.
I placed him in a paradise, and there
Planted the tree of evil, so that he
Might eat and perish, and my soul procure
Wherewith to sate its malice, and to turn,
Even like a heartless conqueror of the earth,
All misery to my fame. The race of men,
Chosen to my honour, with impunity
May sate the lusts I planted in their heart.
Here I command thee hence to lead them on,
Until, with hardened feet, their conquering troops
Wade on the promised soil through woman's blood,
And make my name be dreaded through the land.
Yet ever-burning flame and ceaseless woe
Shall be the doom of their eternal souls,
With every soul on this ungrateful earth,
Virtuous or vicious, weak or strong,—even all

Shall perish, to fulfil the blind revenge
(Which you, to men, call justice) of their God.

The murderer's brow
Quivered with horror.

God omnipotent,
Is there no mercy? must our punishment
Be endless? will long ages roll away,
And see no term? Oh! wherefore hast thou made
In mockery and wrath this evil earth?
Mercy becomes the powerful—be but just:
O God! repent and save.

One way remains.
I will beget a son, and he shall bear
The sins of all the world; he shall arise
In an unnoticed corner of the earth,
And there shall die upon a cross, and purge
The universal crime; so that the few
On whom my grace descends, those who are marked
As vessels to the honour of their God,
May credit this strange sacrifice, and save
Their souls alive. Millions shall live and die
Who ne'er shall call upon their Saviour's name,
But, unredeemed, go to the gaping grave.
Thousands shall deem it an old woman's tale,
Such as the nurses frighten babes withal.
These in a gulph of anguish and of flame
Shall curse their reprobation endlessly,
Yet tenfold pangs shall force them to avow,
Even on their beds of torment, where they howl,
My honour, and the justice of their doom.

What then avail their virtuous deeds, their thoughts
Of purity, with radiant genius bright,
Or lit with human reason's earthly ray?
Many are called, but few will I elect.
Do thou my bidding, Moses!

Even the murderer's cheek
Was blanched with horror, and his quivering lips
Scarce faintly uttered—O Almighty one,
I tremble and obey!

O Spirit! centuries have set their seal
On this heart of many wounds, and loaded brain,
Since the Incarnate came. Humbly he came,
Veiling his horrible Godhead in the shape
Of man, scorned by the world, his name unheard,
Save by the rabble of his native town,
Even as a parish demagogue. He led
The crowd; he taught them justice, truth, and peace,
In semblance; but he lit within their souls
The quenchless flames of zeal, and bless'd the sword
He brought on earth to satiate with the blood
Of truth and freedom his malignant soul.
I stood beside him: on the torturing cross
No pain assailed his unterrestrial sense,
And yet he groaned. Indignantly I summed
The massacres and miseries which his name
Had sanctioned in my country, and I cried,
Go! go! in mockery.
A smile of godlike malice re-illumined
His fading lineaments.—I go, he cried,
But thou shalt wander o'er the the unquiet earth
Eternally.——The dampness of the grave
Bathed my imperishable front. I fell,

And long lay tranced upon the charmed soil.
When I awoke hell burned within my brain,
Which staggered on its seat; for all around
The mouldering relics of my kindred lay,
Even as the Almighty's ire arrested them,
And in their various attitudes of death
My murdered children's mute and eyeless scull
Glared ghastlily upon me.

But my soul,
From sight and sense of the polluting woe
Of tyranny, had long learned to prefer
Hell's freedom to the servitude of heaven.
Therefore I rose, and dauntlessly began
My lonely and unending pilgrimage,
Resolved to wage unwearіable war
With my almighty tyrant, and to hurl
Defiance at his impotence to harm
Beyond the curse I bore. The very hand
That barred my passage to the peaceful grave
Has crushed the earth to misery, and given
Its empire to the chosen of his slaves.
These have I seen, even from the earliest dawn,
Of weak, unstable, and precarious, power;
Then preaching peace, as now they practise war,
So, when they turned but from the massacre
Of unoffending infidels, to quench
Their thirst for ruin in the very blood
That flowed in their own veins, and pityless zeal
Froze every human feeling, as the wife
Sheathed in her husband's heart the sacred steel,
Even whilst its hopes were dreaming of her love;
And friends to friends, brothers to brothers, stood,

Opposed in bloodiest battle-field, and war,
Scarce satiable by fate's last death-draught waged,
Drunk from the wine-press of the Almighty's wrath;
Whilst the red cross, in mockery of peace,
Pointed to victory! When the fray was done,
No remnant of the exterminated faith
Survived to tell its ruin, but the flesh,
With putrid smoke poisoning the atmosphere,
That rotted on the half-extinguished pile.

Yes! I have seen God's worshipers unsheath
The sword of his revenge, when grace descended,
Confirming all unnatural impulses,
To sanctify their desolating deeds;
And frantic priests waved the ill-omened cross
O'er the unhappy earth: then shone the sun
On showers of gore from the upflashing steel
Of safe assassination, and all crime
Made stingless by the spirits of the Lord,
And blood-red rainbows canopied the land.

Spirit! no year of my eventful being
Has passed unstained by crime and misery,
Which flows from God's own faith. I've marked his slav
With tongues whose lies are venomous, beguile
The insensate mob, and, whilst one hand was red
With murder, feign to stretch the other out
For brotherhood and peace; and, that they now
Babble of love and mercy, whilst their deeds
Are marked with all the narrowness and crime
That freedom's young arm dares not yet chastise,
Reason may claim our gratitude, who now,
Establishing the imperishable throne

Of truth, and stubborn virtue, maketh vain
The unprevailing malice of my foe,
Whose bootless rage heaps torments for the brave,
Adds impotent eternities to pain,
Whilst keenest disappointment racks his breast
To see the smiles of peace around them play,
To frustrate or to sanctify their doom.

Thus have I stood,—through a wild waste of years
Struggling with whirlwinds of mad agony,
Yet peaceful, and serene, and self-enshrined,
Mocking my powerless tyrant's horrible curse
With stubborn and unalterable will,
Even as a giant oak, which heaven's fierce flame
Had scathed in the wilderness, to stand
A monument of fadeless ruin there;
Yet peacefully and movelessly it braves
The midnight conflict of the wintry storm,
As in the sun-light's calm it spreads
Its worn and withered arms on high
To meet the quiet of a summer's noon.

The Fairy waved her wand:
Ahasuerus fled
Fast as the shapes of mingled shade and mist,
That lurk in the glens of a twilight grove,
Flee from the morning beam:
The matter of which dreams are made
Not more endowed with actual life
Than this phantasmal portraiture
Of wandering human thought.

VIII.

The present and the past thou hast beheld:
It was a desolate sight. Now, Spirit, learn
The secrets of the future.—Time!
Unfold the brooding pinion of thy gloom,
Render thou up thy half-devoured babes,
And from the cradles of eternity,
Where millions lie lulled to their portioned sleep
By the deep murmuring stream of passing things,
Tear thou that gloomy shroud.—Spirit, behold
Thy glorious destiny!

Joy to the Spirit came.
Through the wide rent in Time's eternal veil
Hope was seen beaming through the mists of fear:
Earth was no longer hell;
Love, freedom, health, had given
Their ripeness to the manhood of its prime,
And all its pulses beat
Symphonious to the planetary spheres:
Then dulcet music swelled
Concordant with the life-strings of the soul;
It throbbed in sweet and languid beatings there,
Catching new life from transitory death—
Like the vague sighings of a wind at even,
That wakes the wavelets of the slumbering sea,
And dies on the creation of its breath,
And sinks and rises, fails and swells, by fits,
Was the pure stream of feeling
That sprang from these sweet notes,
And o'er the Spirit's human sympathies
With mild and gentle motion calmly flowed.

Joy to the Spirit came,—
Such joy as when a lover sees
The chosen of his soul in happiness
And witnesses her peace
Whose woe to him were bitterer than death,
Sees her unfaded cheek
Glow mantling in first luxury of health,
Thrills with her lovely eyes,
Which like two stars amid the heaving main
Sparkle through liquid bliss.
Then in her triumph spoke the Fairy Queen:
I will not call the ghost of ages gone
To unfold the frightful secrets of its lore;
The present now is past,
And those events that desolate the earth
Have faded from the memory of Time,
Who dares not give reality to that
Whose being I annul. To me is given
The wonders of the human world to keep,
Space, matter, time, and mind. Futurity
Exposes now its treasure: let the sight
Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope.
O human Spirit! spur thee to the goal
Where virtue fixes universal peace,
And, midst the ebb and flow of human things,
Show somewhat stable, somewhat certain still,—
A lighthouse o'er the wild of dreary waves.

The habitable earth is full of bliss.
Those wastes of frozen billows that were hurled
By everlasting snow-storms round the poles,
Where matter dared not vegetate nor live,
But ceaseless frost round the vast solitude

Bound its broad zone of stillness, are unloosed;
And fragrant zephyrs there from spicy isles
Ruffle the placid ocean deep, that rolls
Its broad bright surges to the sloping sand,
Whose roar is wakened into echoings sweet
To murmur through the heaven-breathing groves,
And melodize with man's blest nature there.

Those deserts of immeasurable sand,
Whose age-collected fervours scarce allowed
A bird to live, a blade of grass to spring,
Where the shrill chirp of the green lizard's love
Broke on the sultry silentness alone,
Now teem with countless rills and shady woods,
Corn-fields and pastures and white cottages;
And, where the startled wilderness beheld
A savage conqueror stained in kindred blood,
A tigress sating with the flesh of lambs,
The unnatural famine of her toothless cubs,
While shouts and howlings through the desert rang,
Sloping and smooth the daisy-spangled lawn,
Offering sweet incense to the sunrise, smiles
To see a babe before his mother's door,
Sharing his morning's meal
With the green and golden basilisk
That comes to lick his feet.

Those trackless deeps, where many a weary sail
Has seen above the illimitable plain,
Morning on night, and night on morning, rise,
Whilst still no land to greet the wanderer spread
Its shadowy mountains on the sun-bright sea,
Where the loud roarings of the tempest-waves

So long have mingled with the gusty wind
In melancholy loneliness, and swept
The desert of those ocean solitudes,
But vocal to the sea-bird's harrowing shriek,
The bellowing monster, and the rushing storm,
Now to the sweet and many-mingling sounds
Of kindliest human impulses respond.
Those lonely realms bright garden-isles begem,
With lightsome clouds and shining seas between,
And fertile vallies, resonant with bliss,
Whilst green woods overcanopy the wave,
Which, like a toil-worn labourer, leaps to shore,
To meet the kisses of the flowrets there.

All things are recreated, and the flame
Of consentaneous love inspires all life:
The fertile bosom of the earth gives suck
To myriads, who still grow beneath her care,
Rewarding her with their pure perfectness:
The balmy breathings of the wind inhale
Her virtues, and diffuse them all abroad:
Health floats amid the gentle atmosphere,
Glows in the fruits, and mantles on the stream:
No storms deform the beaming brow of heaven,
Nor scatter in the freshness of its pride
The foliage of the ever-verdant trees;
But fruits are ever ripe, flowers ever fair,
And autumn proudly bears her matron grace,
Kindling a flush on the fair cheek of spring,
Whose virgin bloom beneath the ruddy fruit
Reflects its tint, and blushes into love.

The lion now forgets to thirst for blood:
There might you see him sporting in the sun

Beside the deadless kid; his claws are sheathed,
His teeth are harmless; custom's force has made
His nature as the nature of a lamb.
Like passion's fruit, the nightshade's tempting bane
Poisons no more the pleasure it bestows:
All bitterness is past; the cup of joy
Unmingled mantles to the goblet's brim,
And courts the thirsty lips it fled before.

But chief, ambiguous man, he that can know
More misery, and dream more joy, than all;
Whose keen sensations thrill within his breast
To mingle with a loftier instinct there,
Lending their power to pleasure and to pain,
Yet raising, sharpening, and refining, each;
Who stands amid the ever-varying world,
The burthen or the glory of the earth;
He chief perceives the change; his being notes
The gradual renovation, and defines
Each movement of its progress on his mind.

Man, where the gloom of the long polar night
Lowers o'er the snow-clad rocks and frozen soil,
Where scarce the hardiest herb that braves the frost
Basks in the moonlight's ineffectual glow,
Shrank with the plants, and darkened with the night;
His chilled and narrow energies, his heart,
Insensible to courage, truth, or love,
His stunted stature and imbecile frame,
Marked him for some abortion of the earth,
Fit compeer of the bears that roamed around,
Whose habits and enjoyments were his own:
His life a feverish dream of stagnant woe,
Whose meagre wants, but scantily fulfilled,

Apprised him ever of the joyless length
Which his short being's wretchedness had reached;
His death a pang which famine, cold, and toil,
Long on the mind, whilst yet the vital spark
Clung to the body stubbornly, had brought:
All was inflicted here that earth's revenge
Could wreak on the infringers of her law;
One curse alone was spared—the name of God.

Nor where the tropics bound the realms of day
With a broad belt of mingling cloud and flame,
Where blue mists through the unmoving atmosphere
Scattered the seeds of pestilence, and fed
Unnatural vegetation, where the land
Teemed with all earthquake, tempest, and disease,
Was man a nobler being. Slavery
Had crushed him to his country's blood-stained dust;
Or he was bartered for the fame of power,
Which, all internal impulses destroying,
Makes human will an article of trade;
Or he was changed with Christians for their gold,
And dragged to distant isles, where, to the sound
Of the flesh-mangling scourge, he does the work
Of all-polluting luxury and wealth,
Which doubly visits on the tyrants' heads
The long-protracted fulness of their woe;
Or he was led to legal butchery,
To turn to worms beneath that burning sun
Where kings first leagued against the rights of men,
And priests first traded with the name of God,

Even where the milder zone afforded man
A seeming shelter, yet contagion there,

Blighting his being with unnumbered ills,
Spread like a quenchless fire; nor truth till late
Availed to arrest its progress, or create
That peace which first in bloodless victory waved
Her snowy standard o'er this favoured clime:
There man was long the train-bearer of slaves,
The mimic of surrounding misery,
The jackal of ambition's lion-rage,
The bloodhound of religion's hungry zeal.

Here now the human being stands adorning
This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind,
Blest from his birth with all bland impulses,
Which gently in his noble bosom wake
All kindly passions and all pure desires.
Him, still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing,
Which from the exhaustless lore of human weal
Draws on the virtuous mind the thoughts that rise
In time-destroying infiniteness, gift
With self-enshrined eternity, that mocks
The unprevailing hoariness of age,
And man, once fleeting o'er the transient scene
Swift as an unremembered vision, stands
Immortal upon earth: no longer now
He slays the lamb that looks him in the face,
And horribly devours his mangled flesh,
Which, still avenging nature's broken law,
Kindled all putrid humours in his frame,
All evil passions, and all vain belief,
Hatred, despair, and loathing, in his mind,
The germs of misery, death, disease, and crime.
No longer now the winged habitants,
That in the woods their sweet lives sing away,

Flee from the form of man; but gather round,
And prune their sunny feathers on the hands
Which little children stretch in friendly sport
Towards these dreadless partners of their play.
All things are void of terror: man has lost
His terrible prerogative, and stands
An equal amidst equals: happiness
And science dawn though late upon the earth.
Peace cheers the mind, health renovates the frame;
Disease and pleasure cease to mingle here,
Reason and passion cease to combat there,
Whilst each unfettered o'er the earth extends
Its all-subduing energies, and wields
The sceptre of a vast dominion there;
Whilst every shape and mode of matter lends
Its force to the omnipotence of mind,
Which from its dark mine drags the gem of truth
To decorate its paradise of peace.

IX.

O HAPPY Earth! reality of Heaven!
To which those restless souls, that ceaselessly
Throng through the human universe, aspire;
Thou consummation of all mortal hope!
Thou glorious prize of blindly-working will!
Whose rays, diffused throughout all space and time,
Verge to one point, and blend for ever there:
Of purest spirits thou pure dwelling-place!
Where care and sorrow, impotence and crime,

Languor, disease, and ignorance, dare not come:
O happy Earth, reality of Heaven!

Genius has seen thee in her passionate dreams,
And dim forebodings of thy loveliness,
Haunting the human heart, have there entwined
Those rooted hopes of some sweet place of bliss
Where friends and lovers meet to part no more.
Thou art the end of all desire and will,
The product of all action; and the souls
That by the paths of an aspiring change
Have reached thy haven of perpetual peace,
There rest from the eternity of toil
That framed the fabric of thy perfectness.

Even Time, the conqueror, fled thee in his fear;
That hoary giant, who, in lonely pride,
So long had ruled the world, that nations fell
Beneath his silent footstep. Pyramids,
That for milleniums had withstood the tide
Of human things, his storm-breath drove in sand
Across that desert where their stones survived
The name of him whose pride had heaped them there.
Yon monarch, in his solitary pomp,
Was but the mushroom of a summer day,
That his light-winged footstep pressed to dust.
Time was the king of earth: all things gave way
Before him, but the fixed and virtuous will,
The sacred sympathies of soul and sense,
That mocked his fury and prepared his fall.
Yet slow and gradual dawned the morn of love.
Long lay the clouds of darkness o'er the scene,
Till from its native heaven they rolled away:

First, crime triumphant o'er all hope careered
Unblushing, undisguising, bold, and strong;
Whilst falsehood, tricked in virtue's attributes,
Long sanctified all deeds of vice and woe,
Till, done by her own venomous sting to death,
She left the moral world without a law,
No longer fettering passion's fearless wing,
Nor searing reason with the brand of God.
Then steadily the happy ferment worked;
Reason was free: and wild though passion went
Through tangled glens and wood-embosomed meads,
Gathering a garland of the strangest flowers,
Yet, like the bee returning to her queen,
She bound the sweetest on her sister's brow,
Who meek and sober kissed the sportive child,
No longer trembling at the broken rod.

Mild was the slow necessity of death:
The tranquil Spirit failed beneath its grasp,
Without a groan, almost without a fear,
Calm as a voyager to some distant land,
And full of wonder, full of hope, as he.
The deadly germs of languor and disease
Died in the human frame, and purity
Blest with all gifts her earthly worshipers:
How vigorous then the athletic form of age!
How clear its open and unwrinkled brow!
Where neither avarice, cunning, pride, nor care,
Had stamped the seal of grey deformity
On all the mingling lineaments of time.
How lovely the intrepid front of youth!
With meek-eyed courage decked with freshest grace;
Courage of soul, that dreaded not a name,

And elevated will, that journeyed on
Through life's phantasmal scene in fearlessness,
With virtue, love, and pleasure, hand in hand.

Then, that sweet bondage which is freedom's self,
And rivets with sensation's softest tie
The kindred sympathies of human souls,
Needed no fetters of tyrannic law:
Those delicate and timid impulses
In nature's primal modesty arose,
And with undoubting confidence disclosed
The growing longings of its dawning love,
Unchecked by dull and selfish chastity,
That virtue of the cheaply virtuous,
Who pride themselves in senselessness and frost.
No longer prostitution's venomed bane
Poisoned the springs of happiness and life;
Woman and man, in confidence and love
Equal and free and pure, together trod
The mountain-paths of virtue, which no more
Were stained with blood from many a pilgrim's feet.

Then, where, through distant ages, long in pride
The place of the monarch-slave had mocked
Famine's faint groan and penury's silent tear,
A heap of crumbling ruins stood, and threw
Year after year their stones upon the field,
Wakening a lonely echo; and the leaves
Of the old thorn, that on the topmost tower
Usurped the royal ensign's grandeur, shook
In the stern storm that swayed the topmost tower,
And whispered strange tales in the whirlwind's ear.

Low through the lone cathedral's roofless aisles
The melancholy winds a death-dirge sung:
It were a sight of awfulness to see
The works of faith and slavery, so vast,
So sumptuous, yet so perishing withal!
Even as the corps that rests beneath its wall.
A thousand mourners deck the pomp of death
To day; the breathing marble glows above
To decorate its memory, and tongues
Are busy of its life: to-morrow, worms
In silence and in darkness seize their prey.

Within the massy prison's mouldering courts,
Fearless and free, the ruddy children played,
Weaving gay chaplets for their innocent brows
With the green ivy and the red wall-flower,
That mock the dungeon's unavailing gloom;
The ponderous chains, and gratings of strong iron,
There rusted amid heaps of broken stone
That mingled slowly with their native earth:
There the broad beam of day, which feebly once
Lighted the cheek of lean captivity
With a pale and sickly glare, then freely shone
On the pure smiles of infant playfulness:
No more the shuddering voice of hoarse despair
Pealed through the echoing vaults, but soothing notes
Of ivy-fingered winds and gladsome birds
And merriment were resonant around.

These ruins soon left not a wreck behind:
Their elements, wide scattered o'er the globe,
To happier shapes were moulded, and became
Ministrant to all blissful impulses:

Thus human things were perfected, and earth,
Even as a child beneath its mother's love,
Was strengthened in all excellence, and grew
Fairer and nobler with each passing year.

Now Time his dusky pennons o'er the scene
Closes in steadfast darkness, and the past
Fades from our charmed sight. My task is done;
Thy lore is learned. Earth's wonders are thine own,
With all the fear and all the hope they bring.
My spells are past: the present now recurs.
Ah me! a pathless wilderness remains
Yet unsubdued by man's reclaiming hand.

Yet, human Spirit, bravely hold thy course.
Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue
The gradual paths of an aspiring change;
For birth and life and death, and that strange state
Before the naked soul has found its home,
All tend to perfect happiness, and urge
The restless wheels of being on their way,
Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life,
Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal:
For birth but wakes the spirit to the sense
Of outward shews, whose unexperienced shape
New modes of passion to its frame may lend;
Life is its state of action, and the store
Of all events is aggregated there
That variegate the eternal universe;
Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom,
That leads to azure isles and beaming skies
Of happy regions of eternal hope.
Therefore, O Spirit! fearlessly bear on;

Though storms may break the primrose on its stalk,
Though frosts may blight the freshness of its bloom,
Yet spring's awakening breath will woo the earth,
To feed with kindliest dews its favourite flower,
That blooms in mossy banks and darksome glens,
Lighting the green-wood with its sunny smile.
Fear not then, Spirit, death's disrobing hand,
So welcome when the tyrant is awake,
So welcome when the bigot's hell-torch burns;
'Tis but the voyage of a darksome hour,
The transient gulph-dream of a startling sleep.
Death is no foe to virtue: earth has seen
Love's brightest roses on the scaffold bloom,
Mingling with freedom's fadeless laurels there,
And presaging the truth of visioned bliss.
Are there not hopes within thee, which this scene
Of linked and gradual being has confirmed?
Whose stingings bade thy heart look further still,
When, to the moonlight walk by Henry led,
Sweetly and sadly thou didst talk of death?
And wilt thou rudely tear them from thy breast,
Listening supinely to a bigot's creed,
Or tamely crouching to the tyrant's rod,
Whose iron thongs are red with human gore?
Never: but bravely bearing on, thy will
Is destined an eternal war to wage
With tyranny and falsehood, and uproot
The germs of misery from the human heart.
Thine is the hand whose piety would soothe
The thorny pillow of unhappy crime,
Whose impotence an easy pardon gains,
Watching its wanderings as a friend's disease:
Thine is the brow whose mildness would defy

Its fiercest rage, and brave its sternest will,
When fenced by power and master of the world.
Thou art sincere and good; of resolute mind,
Free from heart-withering custom's cold control,
Of passion lofty, pure, and unsubdued.
Earth's pride and meanness could not vanquish thee,
And therefore art thou worthy of the boon
Which thou hast now received: virtue shall keep
Thy footsteps in the path that thou hast trod,
And many days of beaming hope shall bless
Thy spotless life of sweet and sacred love.
Go, happy one, and give that bosom joy
Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
Light, life, and rapture, from thy smile.

The fairy waves her wand of charm.
Speechless with bliss the Spirit mounts the car
That rolled beside the battlement,
Bending her beamy eyes in thankfulness.
Again the enchanted steeds were yoked,
Again the burning wheels inflame
The steep descent of heaven's untrodden way.
Fast and far the chariot flew:
The vast and fiery globes that rolled
Around the Fairy's palace-gate
Lessened by slow degrees, and soon appeared
Such tiny twinklers as the planet orbs,
That there attendant on the solar power
With borrowed light pursued their narrower way.
Earth floated then below:
The chariot paused a moment there;
The Spirit then descended:
The restless coursers pawed the ungenial soil,

Snuffed the gross air, and then, their errand done,
Unfurled their pinions to the winds of heaven.

The Body and the Soul united then,
A gentle start convulsed Ianthe's frame:
Her veiny eyelids quietly unclosed;
Moveless awhile the dark blue orbs remained:
She looked around in wonder, and beheld
Henry, who kneeled in silence by her couch,
Watching her sleep with looks of speechless love,
And the bright beaming stars
That through the casement shone.

THE END OF QUEEN MAB.

NOTES.

I.—Page 196.

The sun's unclouded orb
Rolled through the black concave.

Beyond our atmosphere the sun would appear a rayless orb of fire in the midst of a black concave. The equal diffusion of its light on earth is owing to the refraction of the rays by the atmosphere, and their reflection from other bodies. Light consists either of vibrations propagated through a subtle medium, or of numerous minute particles repelled in all directions from the luminous body. Its velocity greatly exceeds that of any substance with which we are acquainted: observations on the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites have demonstrated that light takes up no more than 8′ 7″ in passing from the sun to the earth, a distance of 95,000,000 miles.—Some idea may be gained of the immense distance of the fixed stars, when it is computed that many years would elapse before light could reach this earth from the nearest of them; yet in one year light travels 5,422,400,000,000 miles, which is a distance 5,707,600 times greater than that of the sun from the earth.

I.—Page 197.

Whilst round the chariot's way
Innumerable systems rolled.

The plurality of worlds,—the indefinite immensity of the universe is a most awful subject of contemplation. He who rightly feels its mystery and grandeur is in no danger of seduction from the falsehoods of religious systems, or of deifying the principle of the universe. It is impossible to believe that the Spirit that pervades this infinite machine begat a son upon the body of a Jewish woman, or is angered at the consequences of that necessity which is a synonime of itself. All that miserable tale of the Devil, and Eve, and an Intercessor, with the childish mummeries of the God of the Jews, is irreconcileable with the knowledge of the stars. The works of his fingers have borne witness against him.

The nearest of the fixed stars is inconceivably distant from the earth, and they are probably proportionably distant from each other. By a calculation of the velocity of light, Syrius is supposed to be at least 54,224,000,000,000 miles from the earth.* That which appears only like a thin and silvery cloud, streaking the heaven, is in effect composed of innumerable clusters of suns, each shining with its own light, and illuminating numbers of planets that revolve around them.

* See Nicholson's Encyclopedia, art. Light.

Millions and millions of suns are ranged around us, all attended by innumerable worlds, yet calm, regular, and harmonious, all keeping the paths of immutable necessity.

IV.—Page 220.

These are the hired bravos who defend
The tyrant's throne.

To employ murder as a means of justice is an idea which a man of an enlightened mind will not dwell upon with pleasure. To march forth in rank and file, and all the pomp of streamers and trumpets, for the purpose of shooting at our fellow-men as a mark; to inflict upon them all the variety of wound and anguish; to leave them weltering in their blood; to wander over the field of desolation, and count the number of the dying and the dead,—are employments which in thesis we may maintain to be necessary, but which no good man will contemplate with gratulation and delight. A battle we suppose is won:—thus truth is established, thus the cause of justice is confirmed! It surely requires no common sagacity to discern the connection between this immense heap of calamities and the assertion of truth or the maintenance of justice.

Kings, and ministers of state, the real authors of the calamity, sit unmolested in their cabinet, while those against whom the fury of the storm is directed are, for the most part, persons who have been trepanned into the service, or who are dragged unwillingly from their

peaceful homes into the field of battle. A soldier is a man whose business it is to kill those who never offended him, and who are the innocent martyrs of other men's iniquities. Whatever may become of the abstract question of the justifiableness of war, it seems impossible that the soldier should not be a depraved and unnatural being.

To these more serious and momentous considerations it may be proper to add a recollection of the ridiculousness of the military character. Its first constituent is obedience: a soldier is, of all descriptions of men, the most completely a machine; yet his profession inevitably teaches him something of dogmatism, swaggering, and self-consequence: he is like the puppet of a show-man, who, at the very time he is made to strut, and swell, and display the most farcical airs, we perfectly know cannot assume the most insignificant gesture, advance either to the right or the left, but as he is moved by his exhibitor.—*Godwin's Enquirer, Essay V.*

I will here subjoin a little poem, so strongly expressive of my abhorrence of despotism and falsehood, that I fear lest it never again may be depictured so vividly. This opportunity is perhaps the only one that ever will occur of rescuing it from oblivion.

FALSEHOOD AND VICE:

A DIALOGUE.

Whilst monarchs laughed upon their thrones
To hear a famished nation's groans,
And hugged the wealth wrung from the woe
That makes its eyes and veins o'erflow,—
Those thrones, high built upon the heaps
Of bones where frenzied famine sleeps,
Where slavery wields her scourge of iron,
Red with mankind's unheeded gore,
And war's mad fiends the scene environ,
Mingling with shrieks a drunken roar,
There Vice and Falsehood took their stand,
High raised above th' unhappy land.

Falsehood. Brother! arise from the dainty fare
Which thousands have toiled and bled to bestow;
A finer feast for thy hungry ear
Is the news that I bring of human woe.

Vice. And, secret one, what hast thou done,
To compare, in thy tumid pride, with me?
I, whose career, through the blasted year,
Has been tracked by despair and agony.

Fals. What have I done?—I have torn the robe
From baby truth's unsheltered form,
And round the desolated globe

Borne safely the bewildering charm:
My tyrant-slaves to a dungeon-floor
Have bound the fearless innocent,
And streams of fertilizing gore
Flow from her bosom's hideous rent,
Which this unfailing dagger gave....
I dread that blood!—no more—this day
Is ours, though her eternal ray
Must shine upon our grave.
Yet know, proud Vice, had I not given
To thee the robe I stole from heaven,
Thy shape of ugliness and fear
Had never gained admission here.

Vice. And know, that, had I disdained to toil,
But sate in my loathsome cave the while,
And ne'er to these hateful sons of heaven
GOLD, MONARCHY, and MURDER, given;
Hadst thou with all thine art essayed
One of thy games then to have played,
With all thine overweening boast,
Falsehood, I tell thee thou hadst lost!—
Yet wherefore this dispute?—we tend,
Fraternal, to one common end;
In this cold grave beneath my feet
Will our hopes, our fears, and our labours, meet.

Fals. I brought my daughter, RELIGION, on earth:
She smothered Reason's babes in their birth;
But dreaded their mother's eye severe,—
So the crocodile slunk off slily in fear,

And loosed her bloodhounds from the den....
They started from dreams of slaughtered men,
And, by the light of her poison eye,
Did her work o'er the wide earth frightfully;
The dreadful stench of her torches' flare,
Fed with human fat, polluted the air:
The curses, the shrieks, the ceaseless cries
Of the many-mingling miseries,
As on she trod, ascended high
And trumpeted my victory!—
Brother, tell what thou hast done.

Vice. I have extinguished the noon-day sun
In the carnage-smoke of battles won:
Famine, murder, hell, and power,
Were glutted in that glorious hour,
Which searchless fate had stamped for me
With the seal of her security....
For the bloated wretch on yonder throne
Commanded the bloody fray to rise.
Like me he joyed at the stifled moan
Wrung from a nation's miseries;
While the snakes, whose slime even him *defiled*,
In ecstacies of malice smiled:
They thought 'twas theirs,—but mine the deed!
Theirs is the toil, but mine the meed—
Ten thousand victims madly bleed.
They dream that tyrants goad them there
With poisonous war to taint the air;

These tyrants, on their beds of thorn,
Swell with the thoughts of murderous fame,
And with their gains to lift my name,
Restless they plan from night to morn:
I—I do all; without my aid
Thy daughter, that relentless maid,
Could never o'er a death-bed urge
The fury of her venomed scourge.

Fals. Brother, well:—the world is ours;
And whether thou or I have won,
The pestilence expectant lowers
On all beneath yon blasted sun.
Our joys, our toils, our honours, meet
In the milk-white and wormy winding-sheet;
A short-lived hope, unceasing care,
Some heartless scraps of godly prayer,
A moody curse, and a frenzied sleep
Ere gapes the grave's unclosing deep
A tyrant's dream, a coward's start,
The ice that clings to a priestly heart,
A judge's frown, a courtier's smile,
Make the great whole for which we toil;
And, brother, whether thou or I
Have done the work of misery,
It little boots: thy toil and pain,
Without my aid, were more than vain;
And but for thee I ne'er had sate
The guardian of heaven's palace gate.

V.—Page 223.

Thus do the generations of the earth
Go to the grave and issue from the womb.

One generation passeth away and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place whence the rivers come, thither shall they return again.

Ecclesiastes, chap. i.

V.—Page 223.

Even as the leaves
Which the keen frost-wind of the waning year
Has scattered on the forest soil.

Οἵη περ φύλλων γενεὴ, τοιήδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.
Φύλλα τὰ μέν τ'ἄνεμος χαμάδις χέει, ἄλλα δέ θ'ὕλη
Τηλεθόωσα φύει· ἔαρος δ'ἐπιγίγνεται ὥρη.
Ὣς ἀνδρῶν γενεὴ, ἡ μὲν φύει, ἡδ' ἀπολήγει.

ΙΛΙΑΔ. Ζ'. l. 146.

V.—Page 225.

The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and kings.

Suave, mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,
E terrâ magnum álterius spectare laborem:

Non, quia vexari quemquam 'st jocunda voluptas,
Sed, quibus ipse malis careas, quia cernere suave est.
Per campos instructa, tua sine parte pericli,
Suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri:
Sed nil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere,
Edita doctrinâ sapientum, templa serena;
Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre
Errare, atque viam palanteis quærere vitæ;
Certare ingenio; contendere nobilitate,
Nocteis atque dies niti præstante labore
Ad summas emergere opes, rerumque potiri.
O miseras hominum menteis! O pectora cæca!

Lucret. lib. ii.

V.—Page 226.

And statesmen boast
Of wealth.

There is no real wealth but the labour of man. Were the mountains of gold and the valleys of silver, the world would not be one grain of corn the richer; no one comfort would be added to the human race. In consequence of our consideration for the precious metals, one man is enabled to heap to himself luxuries at the expence of the necessaries of his neighbour; a system admirably fitted to produce all the varieties of disease and crime, which never fail to characterise the two extremes of opulence and penury. A speculator takes prides to himself as the promoter of his country's

prosperity, who employs a number of hands in the manufacture of articles avowedly destitute of use, or subservient only to the unhallowed cravings of luxury and ostentation. The nobleman, who employs the peasants of his neighbourhood in building his palaces, until "*jam pauca aratro jugera, regiæ moles relinquent,*" flatters himself that he has gained the title of a patriot by yielding to the impulses of vanity. The show and pomp of courts adduces the same apology for its continuance; and many a fete has been given, many a woman has eclipsed her beauty by her dress, to benefit the labouring poor and to encourage trade. Who does not see that this is a remedy which aggravates, whilst it palliates, the countless diseases of society? The poor are set to labour,—for what? Not the food for which they famish: not the blankets for want of which their babes are frozen by the cold of their miserable hovels: not those comforts of civilization without which civilized man is far more miserable than the meanest savage; oppressed as he is by all its insidious evils, within the daily and taunting prospect of its innumerable benefits assiduously exhibited before him:—no; for the pride of power, for the miserable isolation of pride, for the false pleasures of the hundredth part of society. No greater evidence is afforded of the wide extended and radical mistakes of civilized man than this fact: those arts which are essential to his very being are held in the greatest contempt; employments are lucrative in an

inverse ratio to their usefulness:* the jeweller, the toyman, the actor, gains fame and wealth by the exercise of his useless and ridiculous art; whilst the cultivator of the earth, he without whom society must cease to subsist, struggles through contempt and penury, and perishes by that famine which, but for his unceasing exertion, would annihilate the rest of mankind.

I will not insult common sense by insisting on the doctrine of the natural equality of man. The question is not concerning its desirableness, but its practicability; so far as it is practicable, it is desirable. That state of human society which approaches nearer to an equal partition of its benefits and evils should, *cæteris paribus*, be preferred; but so long as we conceive that a wanton expenditure of human labour, not for the necessities, not even for the luxuries, of the mass of society, but for the egotism and ostentation of a few of its members, is defensible on the ground of public justice, so long we neglect to approximate to the redemption of the human race.

Labour is required for physical, and leisure for moral, improvement: from the former of these advantages the rich, and from the latter the poor, by the inevitable conditions of their respective situations, are precluded. A state which should combine the advantages of both would be subjected to the evils of neither. He that is

* See Rousseau, De l'Inégalité parmi les Hommes." note 7.

deficient in firm health, or vigorous intellect, is but half a man; hence it follows, that, to subject the labouring classes to unnecessary labour, is wantonly to deprive them of any opportunities of intellectual improvement; and that the rich are heaping up for their own mischief the disease, lassitude, and ennui, by which their existence is rendered an intolerable burthen.

English reformers exclaim against sinecures,—but the true pension list is the rent-roll of the landed proprietors: wealth is a power usurped by the few, to compel the many to labour for their benefit. The laws which support this system derive their force from the ignorance and credulity of its victims: they are the result of a conspiracy of the few against the many, who are themselves obliged to purchase this pre-eminence by the loss of all real comfort. ☞

The commodities that substantially contribute to the subsistence of the human species form a very short catalogue: they demand from us but a slender portion of industry. If these only were produced, and sufficiently produced, the species of man would be continued. If the labour necessarily required to produce them were equitably divided among the poor, and, still more, if it were equitably divided among all, each man's share of labour would be light, and his portion of leisure would be ample. There was a time when this leisure would have been of small comparative value: it is to be hoped that the time will come, when it will be applied to the most

important purposes. Those hours, which are not required for the production of the necessaries of life, may be devoted to the cultivation of the understanding, the enlargement of our stock of knowledge, the refinement of our taste, and thus open to us new and more exquisite sources of enjoyment.

* * * * * * * *

It was perhaps necessary that a period of monopoly and oppression should subsist before a period of cultivated equality could subsist. Savages perhaps would never have been excited to the discovery of truth and the invention of art, but by the narrow motives which such a period affords. But, surely, after the savage state has ceased, and men have set out in the glorious career of discovery and invention, monopoly and oppression cannot be necessary to prevent them from returning to a state of barbarism.—*Godwin's Enquirer, Essay II. See also Pol. Jus. book VIII. chap.* 11.

It is a calculation of this admirable author, that all the conveniences of civilized life might be produced, if society would divide the labour equally among its members, by each individual being employed in labour two hours during the day.

V.—Page 226.

Or religion
Drives his wife raving mad.

I am acquainted with a lady of considerable accomplishments, and the mother of a numerous family, whom the Christian religion has goaded to incurable insanity. A parallel case is, I believe, within the experience of every physician.

Nam jam sæpe homines patriam, carosque parentes
Prodiderunt, vitare Acherusia templa petentes.

Lucretius.

V.—Page 229.

Even love is sold.

Not even the intercourse of the sexes is exempt from the despotism of positive institution. Law pretends even to govern the indisciplinable wanderings of passion, to put fetters on the clearest deductions of reason, and, by appeals to the will, to subdue the involuntary affections of our nature. Love is inevitably consequent upon the perception of loveliness. Love withers under constraint: its very essence is liberty: it is compatible neither with obedience, jealousy, nor fear: it is there most pure, perfect, and unlimited, where its votaries live in confidence, equality, and unreserve.

How long then ought the sexual connexion to last?

what law ought to specify the extent of the grievances which should limit its duration? A husband and wife ought to continue so long united as they love each other: any law, which should bind them to cohabitation for one moment after the decay of their affection, would be a most intolerable tyranny, and the most unworthy of toleration. How odious a usurpation of the right of private judgment should that law be considered which should make the ties of friendship indissoluble, in spite of the caprices, the inconstancy, the fallibility, and capacity for improvement of the human mind. And by so much would the fetters of love be heavier and more unendurable than those of friendship, as love is more vehement and capricious, more dependent on those delicate peculiarities of imagination, and less capable of reduction to the ostensible merits of the object.

The state of society in which we exist is a mixture of feudal savageness and imperfect civilization. The narrow and unenlighted morality of the Christian religion is an aggravation of these evils. It is not even until lately that mankind have admitted that happiness is the sole end of the science of ethics, as of all other sciences; and that the fanatical idea of mortifying the flesh for the love of God has been discarded. I have heard, indeed, an ignorant collegian adduce, in favour of Christianity, its hostility to every worldly feeling!*

* The first Christian Emperor made a law by which seduction was punished with death; if the female pleaded her

But, if happiness be the object of morality, of all human unions and disunions; if the worthiness of every action is to be estimated by the quantity of pleasurable sensations it is calculated to produce; then the connection of the sexes is so long sacred as it contributes to the comfort of the parties, and is naturally dissolved when its evils are greater than its benefits. There is nothing immoral in this separation. Constancy has nothing virtuous in itself, independently of the pleasure it confers, and partakes of the temporizing spirit of vice in proportion as it endures tamely moral defects of magnitude in the object of its indiscreet choice. Love is free: to promise for ever to love the same woman is not less absurd than to promise to believe the same creed: such a vow, in both cases, excludes us from all inquiry. The language of the votarist is this: the woman I now love may be infinitely inferior to many others; the creed I now profess may be a mass of errors and absurdities; but I exclude myself from all future information as to the amiability of the one and the

own consent, she also was punished with death; if the parents endeavoured to screen the criminals, they were banished and their estates confiscated; the slaves who might be accessary were burned alive, or forced to swallow melted lead. The very offspring of an illegal love were involved in the consequences of the sentence.—*Gibbon's Decline and Fall, &c.* vol. ii. page 210. See also, for the hatred of the primitive Christians to love and even marriage, page 269.

truth of the other, resolving blindly and in spite of conviction to adhere to them. Is this the language of delicacy and reason? Is the love of such a frigid heart of more worth than its belief?

The present system of constraint does no more, in the majority of instances, than make hypocrites or open enemies. Persons of delicacy and virtue, unhappily united to those whom they find it impossible to love, spend the loveliest season of their life in unproductive efforts to appear otherwise than they are, for the sake of the feelings of their partner or the welfare of their mutual offspring: those of less generosity and refinement openly avow their disappointment, and linger out the remnant of that union, which only death can dissolve, in a state of incurable bickering and hostility. The early education of the children takes its colour from the squabbles of the parents; they are nursed in a systematic school of ill humour, violence, and falsehood. Had they been suffered to part at the moment when indifference rendered their union irksome, they would have been spared many years of misery: they would have connected themselves more suitably, and would have found that happiness in the society of more congenial partners which is for ever denied them by the despotism of marriage. They would have been separately useful and happy members of society, who, whilst united, were miserable, and rendered misanthropical by misery. The conviction that wedlock is indissoluble

holds out the strongest of all temptations to the perverse; they indulge without restraint in acrimony, and all the little tyrannies of domestic life, when they know that their victim is without appeal. If this connection were put on a rational basis, each would be assured that habitual ill temper would terminate in separation, and would check this vicious and dangerous propensity.

Prostitution is the legitimate offspring of marriage and its accompanying errors. Women, for no other crime than having followed the dictates of a natural appetite, are driven with fury from the comforts and sympathies of society. It is less venial than murder; and the punishment which is inflicted on her who destroys her child to escape reproach, is lighter than the life of agony and disease to which the prostitute is irrecoverably doomed. Has a woman obeyed the impulse of unerring nature,—society declares war against her, pityless and eternal war: she must be the tame slave, she must make no reprisals; theirs is the right of persecution, hers the duty of endurance. She lives a life of infamy: the loud and bitter laugh of scorn scares her from all return. She dies of long and lingering disease: yet *she* is in fault, *she* is the criminal, *she* the froward and untameable child,—and society, forsooth, the pure and virtuous matron, who casts her as an abortion from her undefiled bosom! Society avenges herself on the criminals of her own creation; she is employed in anathematizing the vice to-day which yesterday she was

the most zealous to teach. Thus is formed one tenth of the population of London: meanwhile the evil is twofold. Young men, excluded by the fanatical idea of chastity from the society of modest and accomplished women, associate with these vicious and miserable beings, destroying thereby all those exquisite and delicate sensibilities whose existence cold-hearted worldlings have denied: annihilating all genuine passion, and debasing that to a selfish feeling which is the excess of generosity and devotedness. Their body and mind alike crumble into a hideous wreck of humanity; idiotcy and disease become perpetuated in their miserable offspring, and distant generations suffer for the bigoted morality of their forefathers. Chastity is a monkish and evangelical superstition, a greater foe to natural temperance even than unintellectual sensuality; it strikes at the root of all domestic happiness, and consigns more than half the human race to misery, that some few may monopolize according to law. A system could not well have been devised more studiously hostile to human happiness than marriage.

I conceive that, from the abolition of marriage, the fit and natural arrangement of sexual connection would result. I by no means assert that the intercourse would be promiscuous: on the contrary, it appears from the relation of parent to child, that this union is generally of long duration, and marked above all others with generosity and self devotion. But this is a subject

which it is perhaps premature to discuss. That which will result from the abolition of marriage will be natural and right, because choice and change will be exempted from restraint.

In fact, religion and morality, as they now stand, compose a practical code of misery and servitude: the genius of human happiness must tear every leaf from the accursed book of God, ere man can read the inscription on his heart. How would morality, dressed up in stiff stays and finery, start from her own disgusting image, should she look in the mirror of nature!

☞

VI.—Page 232.

To the red and baleful sun
That faintly twinkles there.

The north polar star, to which the axis of the earth, in its present state of obliquity, points. It is exceedingly probable, from many considerations, that this obliquity will gradually diminish, until the equator coincides with the ecliptic: the nights and days will then become equal on the earth throughout the year, and probably the seasons also. There is no great extravagance in presuming that the progress of the perpendicularity of the poles may be as rapid as the progress of intellect; or that there should be a perfect identity between the moral and physical improvement of the human species. It is certain that wisdom is not com-

patible with disease, and that, in the present state of the climates of the earth, health, in the true and comprehensive sense of the word, is out of the reach of civilized man. Astronomy teaches us that the earth is now in its progress, and that the poles are every year becoming more and more perpendicular to the ecliptic. The strong evidence afforded by the history of mythology and geological researches, that some event of this nature has taken place already, affords a strong presumption that this progress is not merely an oscillation, as has been surmised by some late astronomers.* Bones of animals peculiar to the torrid zone have been found in the north of Siberia, and on the banks of the river Ohio. Plants have been found in the fossil state in the interior of Germany which demand the present climate of Hindostan for their production.† The researches of M. Bailly‡ establish the existence of a people who inhabited a tract in Tartary 49° north latitude, of greater antiquity than either the Indians, the Chinese, or the Chaldeans, from whom these nations derived their sciences and theology. We find, from the testimony of ancient writers, that Britain, Germany, and France, were much colder than at present, and that their great

* Laplace, Systême du Monde.

† Cabanis, Rapports du Physique et du Moral de l'Homme, vol. ii. page 406.

‡ Letters sur les Sciences, à Voltaire.—*Bailly.*

rivers were annually frozen over. Astronomy teaches us also, that since this period the obliquity of the earth's position has been considerably diminished. ☞

VI.—Page 236.

No atom of this turbulence fulfils
A vague and unnecessitated task,
Or acts but as it must and ought to act.

Deux exemples serviront à nous rendre plus sensible le principe qui vient d'être posé ; nous emprunterons l'une du physique et l'autre du moral. Dans un tourbillon de poussière qu'éleve un vent impetueux, quelque confus qu'il paroisse à nos yeux; dans la plus affreuse tempête excité par des vents opposés qui soulèvent les flots, il n'y a pas une seule moléculede poussière ou d'eau qui soit placé au *hazard*; qui n'ait sa cause suffisante pour occuper le lieu où elle se trouve, et qui n'agisse rigoureusement de la manière dont elle doit agir. Une géomètre qui connoîtroit exactement les différentes forces qui agissent dans ces deux cas, et les propriétés des molécules qui sont mues, demontreroit que d'après des causes donnés, chaque molécule agit précisément comme elle doit agir, et ne peut agir autrement qu'elle ne fait.

Dans les convulsions terribles qui agitent quelquefois les sociétés politiques, et qui produisent souvent le renversement d'un empire, il n'y a pas une seule action, une seule parole, une seule pensée, une seule volonté, une seule passion dans, les agens qui concourent à la révolution comme destructeurs ou comme victimes, qui ne soit nécessaire, qui

qui n'agisse comme elle doit agir, qui n'opère infailliblement les effets qu'elle doit opérer, suivant la place qu'occupent ces agens dans ce tourbillon moral. Cela paroîtroit évident pour une intelligence qui sera en état de saisir et d'apprécier toutes les actions et réactions des esprits et des corps de ceux qui contribuent à cette révolution.

Systeme de la Nature, vol. i. page 44.

VI.—Page 237.

Necessity! thou mother of the world!

He who asserts the doctrine of Necessity means that, contemplating the events which compose the moral and material universe, he beholds only an immense and uninterrupted chain of causes and effects, no one of which could occupy any other place than it does occupy, or act in any other place than it does act. The idea of necessity is obtained by our experience of the connection between objects, the uniformity of the operations of nature, the constant conjunction of similar events, and the consequent inference of one from the other. Mankind are therefore agreed in the admission of necessity, if they admit that these two circumstances take place in voluntary action. Motive is, to voluntary action in the human mind, what cause is to effect in the material universe. The word liberty, as applied to mind, is analogous to the word chance, as applied to matter: they spring from an ignorance of the certainty of the conjunction of antecedents and consequents.

Every human being is irresistibly impelled to act

precisely as he does act: in the eternity which preceded his birth a chain of causes was generated, which, operating under the name of motives, make it impossible that any thought of his mind, or any action of his life, should be otherwise than it is. Were the doctrine of Necessity false, the human mind would no longer be a legitimate object of science; from like causes it would be in vain that we should expect like effects; the strongest motive would no longer be paramount over the conduct; all knowledge would be vague and undeterminate; we could not predict with any certainty that we might not meet as an enemy tomorrow him from whom we have parted in friendship tonight; the most probable inducements and the clearest reasonings would lose the invariable influence they possess. The contrary of this is demonstrably the fact. Similar circumstances produce unvariably similar effects. The precise character and motives of any man on any occasion being given, the moral philosopher could predict his actions with as much certainty as the natural philosopher could predict the effects of the mixture of any particular chemical substances. Why is the aged husbandman more experienced than the young beginner? Because there is a uniform undeniable necessity in the operations of the material universe. Why is the old statesman more skilful than the raw politician? Because, relying on the necessary conjunction of motive and action, he proceeds to produce moral effects, by the application of

those moral causes which experience has shewn to be effectual. Some actions may be found to which we can attach no motives, but these are the effects of causes with which we are unacquainted. Hence the relation which motive bears to voluntary action is that of cause to effect; nor, placed in this point of view, is it, nor ever has it been the subject of popular or philosophical dispute. None but the few fanatics who are engaged in the herculean task of reconciling the justice of their God with the misery of man, will longer outrage common sense by the supposition of an event without a cause, a voluntary action without a motive. History, politics, morals, criticism, all grounds of reasoning, all principles of science, alike assume the truth of the doctrine of Necessity. No farmer carrying his corn to market doubts the sale of it at the market price. The master of a manufactory no more doubts that he can purchase the human labour necessary for his purposes, than that his machines will act as they have been accustomed to act.

But, whilst none has scrupled to admit necessity as influencing matter, many have disputed its dominion over mind. Independently of its militating with the received ideas of the justice of God, it is by no means obvious to a superficial inquiry. When the mind observes its own operations, it feels no connection of motive and action: but, as we know "nothing more of causation than the constant conjunction of objects and the

consequent inference of one from the other, as we find that these two circumstances are universally allowed to have place in voluntary action, we may be easily led to own that they are subjected to the necessity common to all causes." The actions of the will have a regular conjunction with circumstances and characters; motive is, to voluntary action, what cause is to effect. But the only idea we can form of causation is a constant conjunction of similar objects, and the consequent inference of one from the other: wherever this is the case, necessity is clearly established.

The idea of liberty, applied metaphorically to the will, has sprung from a misconception of the meaning of the word power. What is power?—*id quod potest*, that which can produce any given effect. To deny power, is to say that nothing can or has the power to be or act. In the only true sense of the word power, it applies with equal force to the loadstone as to the human will. Do you think these motives, which I shall present, are powerful enough to rouse him? is a question just as common as, Do you think this lever has the power of raising this weight? The advocates of free-will assert that the will has the power of refusing to be determined by the strongest motive: but the strongest motive is that which, overcoming all others, ultimately prevails; this assertion therefore amounts to a denial of the will being ultimately determined by that motive which does determine it, which is absurd.

But it is equally certain that a man cannot resist the strongest motive, as that he cannot overcome a physical impossibility.

The doctrine of Necessity tends to introduce a great change into the established notions of morality, and utterly to destroy religion. Reward and punishment must be considered, by the Necessarian, merely as motives which he would employ in order to procure the adoption or abandonment of any given line of conduct. Desert, in the present sense of the word, would no longer have any meaning; and he, who should inflict pain upon another for no better reason than that he deserved it, would only gratify his revenge under pretence of satisfying justice. It is not enough, says the advocate of free-will, that a criminal should be prevented from a repetition of his crime: he should feel pain, and his torments, when justly inflicted, ought precisely to be proportioned to his fault. But utility is morality; that which is incapable of producing happiness is useless; and, though the crime of Damiens must be condemned, yet the frightful torments which revenge, under the name of justice, inflicted on this unhappy man, cannot be supposed to have augmented, even at the long run, the stock of pleasurable sensation in the world. At the same time, the doctrine of Necessity does not in the least diminish our disapprobation of vice. The conviction which all feel, that a viper is a poisonous animal, and that a tiger is constrained, by the inevitable condition of his existence, to devour men,

does not induce us to avoid them less sedulously, or, even more, to hesitate in destroying them: but he would surely be of a hard heart, who, meeting with a serpent on a desert island, or in a situation where it was incapable of injury, should wantonly deprive it of existence. A Necessarian is inconsequent to his own principles, if he indulges in hatred or contempt; the compassion which he feels for the criminal is unmixed with a desire of injuring him: he looks with an elevated and dreadless composure upon the links of the universal chain as they pass before his eyes; whilst cowardice, curiosity, and inconsistency, only assail him in proportion to the feebleness and indistinctness with which he has perceived and rejected the delusions of free-will.

Religion is the perception of the relation in which we stand to the principle of the universe. But if the principle of the universe be not an organic being, the model and prototype of man, the relation between it and human beings is absolutely none. Without some insight into its will respecting our actions, religion is nugatory and vain. But will is only a mode of animal mind; moral qualities also are such as only a human being can possess; to attribute them to the principle of the universe is to annex to it properties incompatible with any possible definition of its nature. It is probable that the word God was originally only an expression denoting the unknown cause of the known events which men perceived in the universe. By the vulgar mistake

of a metaphor for a real being, of a word for a thing, it became a man, endowed with human qualities and governing the universe as an earthly monarch governs his kingdom. Their addresses to this imaginary being, indeed, are much in the same style as those of subjects to a king. They acknowledge his benevolence, deprecate his anger, and supplicate his favour.

But the doctrine of Necessity teaches us, that in no case could any event have happened otherwise than it did happen, and that, if God is the author of good, he is also the author of evil; that, if he is entitled to our gratitude for the one, he is entitled to our hatred for the other; that, admitting the existence of this hypothetic being, he is also subjected to the dominion of an immutable necessity. It is plain that the same arguments which prove that God is the author of food, light, and life, prove him also to be the author of poison, darkness, and death. The wide-wasting earthquake, the storm, the battle, and the tyranny, are attributable to this hypothetic being in the same degree as the fairest forms of nature, sunshine, liberty, and peace.

But we are taught, by the doctrine of Necessity, that there is neither good nor evil in the universe, otherwise than as the events to which we apply these epithets have relation to our own peculiar mode of being. Still less than with the hypothesis of a God will the doctrine of Necessity accord with the belief of a future state of punishment. God made man such as he is, and then damned him for being so: for, to say that God was the

author of all good, and man the author of all evil, is to say that one man made a straight line and a crooked one, and another man made the incongruity. ☞

A Mahometan story, much to the present purpose, is recorded, wherein Adam and Moses are introduced disputing before God in the following manner. Thou, says Moses, art Adam, whom God created and animated with the breath of life, and caused to be worshiped by the angels, and placed in Paradise, from whence mankind have been expelled for thy fault. Whereto Adam answered, Thou art Moses, whom God chose for his apostle, and intrusted with his word, by giving thee the tables of the law, and whom he vouchsafed to admit to discourse with himself. How many years dost thou find the law was written before I was created? Says Moses, Forty. And dost thou not find, replied Adam, these words therein, 'And Adam rebelled against his Lord and transgressed? Which Moses confessing, Dost thou therefore blame me, continued he, for doing that which God wrote of me that I should do, forty years before I was created, nay, for what was decreed concerning me fifty thousand years before the creation of heaven and earth?—*Sale's Prelim. Disc. to the Koran*, p. 164.

VII.—Page 239.

There is no God!

This negation must be understood solely to affect a

creative Deity. The hypothesis of a pervading Spirit, coeternal with the universe, remains unshaken.

A close examination of the validity of the proofs adduced to support any proposition is the only secure way of attaining truth, on the advantages of which it is unnecessary to descant: our knowledge of the existence of a Deity is a subject of such importance, that it cannot be too minutely investigated. In consequence of this conviction, we proceed briefly and impartially to examine the proofs which have been adduced. It is necessary first to consider the nature of belief.

When a proposition is offered to the mind, it perceives the agreement or disagreement of the ideas of which it is composed. A perception of their agreement is termed *belief*. Many obstacles frequently prevent this perception from being immediate; these the mind attempts to remove, in order that the perception may be distinct. The mind is active in the investigation, in order to perfect the state of perception of the relation which the component ideas of the proposition bear to each, which is passive: the investigation, being confused with the perception, has induced many falsely to imagine that the mind is active in belief,—that belief is an act of volition,—in consequence of which it may be regulated by the mind. Pursuing, continuing this mistake, they have attached a degree of criminality to disbelief, of which, in its nature, it is incapable: it is equally incapable of merit.

Belief, then, is a passion, the strength of which, like

every other passion, is in precise proportion to the degrees of excitement.

The degrees of excitement are three.

The senses are the sources of all knowledge to the mind; consequently their evidence claims the strongest assent.

The decision of the mind, founded upon our own experience, derived from these sources, claims the next degree.

The experience of others, which addresses itself to the former one, occupies the lowest degree.

(A graduated scale, on which should be marked the capabilities of propositions to approach the test of the senses, would be a just barometer of the belief which ought to be attached to them.)

Consequently no testimony can be admitted which is contrary to reason; reason is founded on the evidence of our senses.

Every proof may be referred to one of these three divisions: it is to be considered what arguments we receive from each of them, which should convince us of the existence of a Deity.

1st. The evidence of the senses. If the Deity should appear to us, if he should convince our senses of his existence, this revelation would necessarily command belief. Those to whom the Deity has thus appeared have the strongest possible conviction of his existence.

But the God of theologians is incapable of local visibility.

2nd. Reason. It is urged that man knows that whatever is, must either have had a beginning, or have existed from all eternity: he also knows, that whatever is not eternal must have had a cause. When this reasoning is applied to the universe, it is necessary to prove that it was created: until that is clearly demonstrated, we may reasonably suppose that it has endured from all eternity. We must prove design before we can infer a designer. The only idea which we can form of causation is derivable from the constant conjunction of objects, and the consequent inference of one from the other. In a case where two propositions are diametrically opposite, the mind believes that which is least incomprehensible;—it is easier to suppose that the universe has existed from all eternity, than to conceive a being beyond its limits capable of creating it: if the mind sinks beneath the weight of one, is it an alleviation to increase the intolerability of the burthen?

The other argument, which is founded on a man's knowledge of his own existence, stands thus. A man knows not only that he now is, but that once he was not; consequently there must have been a cause. But our idea of causation is alone derivable from the constant conjunction of objects and the consequent inference of one from the other; and, reasoning experimentally, we can only infer from effects, causes exactly ad-

equate to those effects. But there certainly is a generative power which is effected by certain instruments: we cannot prove that it is inherent in these instruments; nor is the contrary hypothesis capable of demonstration: we admit that the generative power is incomprehensible; but to suppose that the same effect is produced by an eternal, omniscient, omnipotent being, leaves the cause in the same obscurity, but renders it more incomprehensible.

3rd. Testimony. It is required that testimony should not be contrary to reason. The testimony that the Deity convinces the senses of men of his existence can only be admitted by us, if our mind considers it less probable that these men should have been deceived than that the Deity should have appeared to them. Our reason can never admit the testimony of men, who not only declare that they were eye-witnesses of miracles, but that the Deity was irrational; for he commanded that he should be believed, he proposed the highest rewards for faith, eternal punishments for disbelief. We can only command voluntary actions; belief is not an act of volition; the mind is even passive, or involuntarily active: from this it is evident that we have no sufficient testimony, or rather that testimony is insufficient to prove the being of a God. It has been before shown that it cannot be deduced from reason. They alone, then, who have been convinced by the evidence of the senses, can believe it.

Hence it is evident that, having no proofs from either of the three sources of conviction, the mind *cannot* believe the existence of a creative God: it is also evident, that, as belief is a passion of the mind, no degree of criminality is attachable to disbelief; and that they only are reprehensible who neglect to remove the false medium through which their mind views any subject of discussion. Every reflecting mind must acknowledge that there is no proof of the existence of a Deity.

God is an hypothesis, and, as such, stands in need of proof: the *onus probandi* rests on the theist. Sir Isaac Newton says: "Hypotheses non fingo, quicquid enim ex phœnomenis non deducitur, hypothesis vocanda est, et hypothesis vel meta physicæ, vel physicæ, vel qualitatum occultarum, seu mechanicæ, in philosophiâ locum non habent." To all proofs of the existence of a creative God apply this valuable rule. We see a variety of bodies possessing a variety of powers: we merely know their effects; we are in a state of ignorance with respect to their essences and causes. These Newton calls the phenomena of things; but the pride of philosophy is unwilling to admit its ignorance of their causes. From the phenomena, which are the objects of our senses, we attempt to infer a cause, which we call God, and gratuitously endow it with all negative and contradictory qualities. From this hypothesis we invent this general name, to conceal our ignorance of causes and essences. The being called God by no means

answers with the conditions prescribed by Newton; it bears every mark of a veil woven by philosophical conceit, to hide the ignorance of philosophers even from themselves. They borrow the threads of its texture from the anthropomorphism of the vulgar. Words have been used by sophists for the same purposes, from the occult qualities of the peripatetics to the *effluvium* of Boyle and the *crinities* or *nebulæ* of Herschel. God is represented as infinite, eternal, incomprehensible; he is contained under every *prædicate in non* that the logic of ignorance could fabricate Even his worshipers allow that it is impossible to form any idea of him: they exclaim with the French poet,

" Pour dire ce qu'il est, il faut être lui-même."

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Lord Bacon says, that " Atheism leaves to man reason, philosophy, natural piety, laws, reputation, and every thing that can serve to conduct him to virtue; but superstition destroys all these, and erects itself into a tyranny over the understandings of men; hence atheism never disturbs the government, but renders man more clear-sighted, since he sees nothing beyond the boundaries of the present life."

Bacon's Moral Essays.

La première théologie de l'homme lui fit d'abord craindre et adorer les élémens même, des objets matériels et grossiers; il rendit ensuite ses hommages à des agens présidens aux élémens, à des génies inférieurs, à des héros, ou à

des hommes doués de grandes qualités. A force de réfléchir il crut simplifier les choses en soumettant la nature entière à un seul agent, à un esprit, à un âme universal, qui mettoit cette nature et ses parties en mouvement. En remontant de causes en causes, les mortels ont fini par ne rien voir; et c'est dans cette obscurité qu'ils ont placé leur Dieu; c'est dans cet abîme ténébreux que leur imagination inquiète travaille toujours à se fabriquer des chimères, qui les affligeront jusqu'à ce que la connaissance de la nature les détrompe des phantômes qu'ils ont toujours si vainement adorés.

Si nous voulons nous rendre compte de nos idées sur la Divinité, nous serons obligés de convenir que, par le mot *Dieu*, les hommes n'ont jamais pu désigner que la cause la plus cachée, la plus éloignée, la plus inconnue des effets qu'ils voyaient: ils ne font usage de ce mot, que lorsque le jeu des causes naturelles et connues cesse d'être visible pour eux; des qu'ils perdent le fil de ces causes, ou dès que leur esprit ne peut plus en suivre la chaîne, ils tranchent leur difficulté, et terminent leur recherches en appellant Dieu la dernière des causes, c'est-à-dire celle qui est au-delà de toutes les causes qu'ils connaissent; ainsi ils ne font qu'assigner une dénomination vague à une cause ignorée, à laquelle leur paresse ou les bornes de leur connaissances les forcent de s'arrêter. Toutes les fois qu'on nous dit que Dieu est l'auteur de quelque phénomène, cela signifie qu'on ignore comment un tel phénomène a pu s'opérer par le secours des forces ou des causes que nous connaissons dans la nature.— C'est ainsi que le commun des hommes, dont l'ignorance est le partage, attribue à la Divinité non seulement les effets inusités qui les frappent, mais encore les événemens les plus

simples, dont les causes sont les plus faciles à connaître pour quiconque a pu les méditer. En un mot, l'homme a toujours respecté les causes inconnues des effets surprenans, que son ignorance l'empêchait de démêler. Ce fut sur les debris de la nature que les hommes élevèrent le colosse imaginaire de la Divinité.

Si l'ignorance de la nature donna la naissance aux dieux, la connaissance de la nature est faite pour les détruire. A mesure que l'homme s'instruit, ses forces et ses ressources augmentent avec ses lumières; les sciences, les arts conservateurs, l'industrie, lui fournissent des secours; l'expérience le rassûre ou lui procure des moyens de résister aux efforts de bien des causes qui cessent de l'alarmer dès qu'il les a connues. En un mot, ses terreurs se dissipent dans la même proportion que son esprit s'éclaire. L'homme instruit cesse d'être superstitieux.

Ce n'est jamais que sur parole que des peuples entiers adorent le Dieu de leurs pères et de leurs prêtres: l'autorité, la confiance, la soumission, et l'habitude, leur tiennent lieu de conviction et de preuves; ils se prosternent et prient, parce que leurs pères leur ont appris à se prosterner et prier: mais pourquoi ceux-ci se sont-ils mis à genoux? C'est que dans les temps éloignés leurs législateurs et leurs guides leur en ont fait un devoir. Adorez et croyez, ont-ils dit, des dieux que vous ne pouvez comprendre; rapportez-vous en à notre sagesse profonde; nous en savons plus que vous sur la Divinité. Mais pourquoi m'en rapporterais-je à vous? C'est que Dieu le veut ainsi, c'est que Dieu vous punira si vous osez résister. Mais ce Dieu n'est-il donc pas la chose en question? Cependant les hommes se sont toujours payés de

ce cercle vicieux ; la paresse de leur esprit leur fit trouver plus court de s'en rapporte au jugement des autres. Toutes les notions religieuses sont fondées uniquement sur l'autorité ; toutes les religions du monde defendent l'examen, et ne veulent pas que l'on raisonne ; c'est l'autorité qui veut qu'on croie en Dieu ; ce Dieu n'est lui-même fondé que sur l'autorité de quelques hommes qui prétendent le connaître, et venir de sa part pour l'annoncer à la terre. Un Dieu fait par les hommes a sans doute besoin des hommes pour se faire connaître aux hommes.

Ne seroit-ce donc que pour des prêtres, des inspirés, des metaphysiciens, que seroit reservée la conviction de l'existence d'un Dieu, que l'on dit néanmoins si necessaire à tout le genre-humain? Mais trouvons-nous de l'harmonie entre les opinions théologiques des differens inspirés, ou des penseurs répandus sur la terre ? Ceux-mêmes qui font profession d'adorer le même Dieu, sont-ils d'accord sur son compte ? Sont-ils contents des preuves qui leurs collègues apportent de son existence ? Souscrivent-ils unanimement aux idées qu'ils presentent sur sa nature, sur sa conduite, sur la façon d'entendre ses prétendus oracles ? Est-il une contrée sur la terre où la science de Dieu se soit réellement perfectionnée ? A-t-elle pris quelque part la consistence et l'uniformité que nous voyons prendre aux connaissances humaines, aux arts les plus futiles, aux métiers les plus meprisés ? des mots *d'esprit*, *d'immatérialité*, de *création*, de *prédestination*, de *grace* ; cette foule de distinctions subtiles dont la théologie s'est partout remplie dans quelques pays, ces inventions si ingénieuses, imaginées par des penseurs qui se sont suc-

cédés depuis tant de siècles, n'ont fait, hélas! qu'embrouiller les choses, et jamais la science la plus necessaire aux hommes n'a jusqu'ici pu acquérir la moindre fixité. Depuis des milliers d'années, ces réveurs oisifs se sont perpétuellement relayés pour mediter la Divinité, pour deviner ses voies cachées, pour inventer des hypothèses propres à développe cette enigme importante. Leur peu de succès n'a point découragé la vanité théologique; toujours on a parlé de Dieu : on s'est égorgé pour lui, et cet être sublime demeure toujours le plus ignoré et le plus discuté.

Les hommes auroient été trop heureux, si, se bornant aux objets visibles qui les intéressent, ils eussent employé à perfectioner leurs sciences réelles, leurs loix, leur morale, leur éducation, la moitié des efforts qu'ils ont mis dans leurs recherches sur la Divinité. Ils auroient été bien plus sages encore, et plus fortunés, s'ils eussent pu consentir à laisser leurs guides désœuvrés se quereller entre eux, et sonder des profondeurs capables de les étourdir, sans se mêler de leurs disputes insensées. Mais il est de l'essence de l'ignorance d'attacher de l'importance à ce qu'elle ne comprend pas. La vanité humaine fait que l'esprit se roidit contre les difficultés. Plus un objet se derobe à nox yeux, plus nous faisons d'efforts pour le saiser, parce que dès-lors il aiguillone notre orgueil, il excite notre curiosité, il nous parait intéressant. En combattant pour son Dieu chacun ne combattit en effet que pour les intérêts de sa propre vanité, qui de toutes les passions produites par la mal organization de la société, est la plus prompte á s'allarmer, et la plus propre à produire de très grandes folies.

Si, écartant pour un moment les idées facheuses que la théologie nous donne d'un Dieu capricieux, dont les décrets partiaux et despotiques décident du sort des humains, nous ne voulons fixer nos yeux que sur la bonté prétendue, que tous les hommes, même en tremblant devant ce Dieu, s'accordent à lui donner; si nous lui supposons le projet qu'on lui prête, de n'avoir travaillé que pour sa propre gloire, d'exiger les hommages des êtres intelligens, de ne chercher dans ses œuvres que le bien-être du genre humain; comment concilier ses vues et ses dispositions avec l'ignorance vraiment invincible dans laquelle ce Dieu, si glorieux et si bon, laisse la plûpart des hommes sur son compte? Si Dieu veut être connu, cheri, remercié, que ne se montre-t-il sous des traits favorables à tous ces êtres intelligens dont il veut être aimé et adoré? Pourquoi ne point se manifester à toute la terre d'une façon non équivoque, bien plus capable de nous convaincre, que ces révélations particulières qui semblent accuser la Divinité d'une partialité facheuse pour quelques unes de ses créatures? Le Tout-puissant n'auroit-il donc pas des moyens plus convainquans de se montrer aux hommes que ces métamorphoses ridicules, ces incarnations prétendues, qui nous sont attestées par des écrivains si peu d'accord entr'eux dans les récits qu'ils en font? Au lieu de tant de miracles, inventés pour prouver la mission divine de tant de législateurs, révérés par les différens peuples du monde, le souverain des espirits ne pouvoit-il pas convaincre tout d'un coup l'esprit humain des choses qu'il a voulu lui faire connaître? Au lieu de suspendre un soleil dans la voûte du firmament; au lieu de répandre sans ordre les étoiles et les constellations qui remplissent l'espace, n'eut-il pas été plus

conformé aux vues d'un Dieu si jaloux de sa gloire et si bien intentionné pour l'homme ; d'écrire d'une façon non sujette à dispute, son nom, ses attributs, ses volontés permanentes, en caractères ineffaçables, et lisibles également pour tous les habitants de la terre? Personne alors n'aurait pu douter de l'existence d'un Dieu, de ses volontés claires, de ses intentions visibles. Sous les yeux de ce Dieu si terrible personne n'aurait eu l'audace de violer ses ordonnances; nul mortel n'eût osé se mettre dans le cas d'attirer sa colère: enfin, nul homme n'eût eu le front d'en imposer en son nom, ou d'interpréter ces volontés suivant ses propres fantaisies.

En effet, quand même on admettrait l'existence du Dieu théologique, et la realité des attributs si discordans qu'on lui donne, l'on ne peut en rien conclure, pour autorizer la conduite ou les cultes qu'on prescrit de lui rendre. La théologie est vraiment *le tonneau des Danaïdes.* A force de qualités contradictoires et d'assertions hazardées, elle a, pour ainsi dire, tellement garroté son Dieu, qu'elle l'a mis dans l'impossibilité d'agir. S'il est infiniment bon, qu'elle raison aurions-nous de le craindre? S'il est infiniment sage, de quoi nous inquiéter sur notre sort? S'il sait tout, pourquoi l'avertir de nos besoins, et le fatiguer de nos prières? S'il est partout, pourquoi lui élever des temples? S'il est maître de tout, pourquoi lui faire des sacrifices et des offrandes? S'il est juste, comment croire qu'il punisse des créatures qu'il a remplies de faiblesses? Si la grace fait tout en elles, quelle raison auroit-il de les récompenser? S'il est tout-puissant, comment l'offenser, comment lui résister? S'il est raisonnable, comment se mettroit-il en colère contre des aveugles, à qui il a laissé la liberté de déraisonner? S'il est

inconcevable, pourquoi nous en occuper? S'IL A PARLÉ, POURQUOI L'UNIVERS N'EST-IL PAS CONVAINCU? Si la connaissance d'un Dieu est la plus nécessaire, pourquoi n'est-elle pas la plus évidente, et la plus claire?

Système de la Nature, London, 1781.

The enlightened and benevolent Pliny thus publicly professes himself an atheist:—Quapropter effigiem Dei, formamque quærere, imbecillitatis humanæ reor. Quisquis est Deus (si modo est alius) et quacunque in parte, totus est sensus, totus est visus, totus auditus, totus animæ, totus animi, totus sui. * * * Imperfectæ vero in homine naturæ præcipua solatia ne deum quidem posse omnia. Namque nec sibi potest mortem consciscere, si velit, quod homini dedit optimum in tantis vitæ pœnis: nec mortales æternitate donare, aut revocare defunctos; nec facere ut qui vixit non vixerit, qui honores gessit non gesserit, nullumque habere in præteritum jus, præterquam oblivionis, (atque ut facetis quoque argumentis societas hæc cum deo copuletur) ut bis dena viginta non sint, et multa similiter efficere non posse.—Per quæ, declaratur haud dubie, naturæ potentiam id quoque esse, quod Deum vocamus.

Plin. *Nat. Hist. Cap. de Deo.*

The consistent Newtonian is necessarily an atheist. See *Sir W. Drummond's Academical Questions, chap.* iii.—Sir W. seems to consider the atheism to which it

leads as a sufficient presumption of the falsehood of the system of gravitation: but surely it is more consistent with the good faith of philosophy to admit a deduction from facts than an hypothesis incapable of proof, although it might militate with the obstinate preconceptions of the mob. Had this author, instead of inveighing against the guilt and absurdity of atheism, demonstrated its falsehood, his conduct would have been more suited to the modesty of the sceptic and the toleration of the philosopher.

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Omnia enim per Dei potentiam facta sunt: imo, quia naturæ potentia nulla est nisi ipsa Dei potentia, autem est nos eatenus Dei potentiam non intelligere, quatenus causas naturales ignoramus: adeoque stulte ad eandem Dei potentiam recurritur, quando rei alicujus, causam naturalem, sive est, ipsam Dei potentiam ignoramus.

SPINOSA, *Tract Theologico-Pol. chap.* i. *page* 14.

VII.—Page 241.

Ahasuerus, rise!

Ahasuerus the Jew crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel. Near two thousand years have elapsed since he was first goaded by never-ending restlessness to rove the globe from pole to pole. When our Lord was wearied with the burthen of his ponderous cross, and wanted to rest before the door of Ahasuerus, the

unfeeling wretch drove him away with brutality. The Saviour of mankind staggered, sinking under the heavy load, but uttered no complaint. An angel of death appeared before Ahasuerus, and exclaimed indignantly, "Barbarian! thou hast denied rest to the son of Man; be it denied thee also, until he comes to judge the world."

A black demon, let loose from hell upon Ahasuerus, goads him now from country to country; he is denied the consolation which death affords, and precluded from the rest of the peaceful grave.

Ahasuerus crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel—he shook the dust from his beard—and taking up one of the sculls heaped there, hurled it down the eminence: it rebounded from the earth in shivered atoms. This was my father! roared Ahasuerus. Seven more sculls rolled down from rock to rock; while the infuriate Jew, following them with ghastly looks, exclaimed—And these were my wives! He still continued to hurl down scull after scull, roaring in dreadful accents—And these, and these, and these were my children! They *could die;* but I! reprobate wretch, alas! I cannot die! Dreadful beyond conception is the judgement that hangs over me. Jerusalem fell—I crushed the sucking babe, and precipitated myself into the destructive flames. I cursed the Romans—but, alas! alas! the restless curse held me by the hair,—and I could not die!

Rome the giantess fell—I placed myself before the falling statue—she fell, and did not crush me. Nations sprang up and disappeared before me;—but I remained and did not die. From cloud-encircled cliffs did I precipitate myself into the ocean; but the foaming billows cast me upon the shore, and the burning arrow of existence pierced my cold heart again. I leaped into Etna's flaming abyss, and roared with the giants for ten long months, polluting with my groans the Mount's sulphureous mouth—ah! ten long months! The volcano fermented, and in a fiery stream of lava cast me up. I lay torn by the torture-snakes of hell amid the glowing cinders, and yet continued to exist. A forest was on fire: I darted on wings of fury and despair into the crackling wood. Fire dropped upon me from the trees, but the flames only singed my limbs; alas! it could not consume them.—I now mixed with the butchers of mankind, and plunged in the tempest of the raging battle. I roared defiance to the infuriate Gaul, defiance to the victorious German; but arrows and spears rebounded in shivers from my body. The Saracen's flaming sword broke upon my scull: balls in vain hissed upon me: the lightnings of battle glared harmless around my loins: in vain did the elephant trample on me, in vain the iron hoof of the wrathful steed! The mine, big with destructive power, burst under me, and hurled me high in the air—I fell on heaps of smoking limbs, but was only singed. The giant's steel club rebounded from my body; the executioner's hand could

not strangle me, the tiger's tooth could not pierce me, nor would the hungry lion in the circus devour me. I cohabited with poisonous snakes, and pinched the red crest of the dragon. The serpent stung but could not destroy me. The dragon tormented but dared not to devour me. I now provoked the fury of tyrants: I said to Nero, Thou art a bloodhound! I said to Christiern, Thou art a bloodhound! I said to Muley Ismail, Thou art a bloodhound!—The tyrants invented cruel torments, but did not kill me.—Ha! not to be able to die—not to be able to die! not to be permitted to rest after the toils of life—to be doomed to be imprisoned for ever in the clay-formed dungeon—to be for ever clogged with this worthless body, its load of diseases and infirmities—to be condemned to hold for milleniums that yawning monster Sameness, and Time, that hungry hyæna, ever bearing children, and ever devouring again her offspring!—Ha! not to be permitted to die! Awful avenger in heaven, hast thou in thine armoury of wrath a punishment more dreadful? then let it thunder upon me, command a hurricane to sweep me down to the foot of Carmel, that I there may lie extended! may pant, and writhe, and die!

This fragment is the translation of part of some German work, whose title I have vainly endeavoured to discover. I picked it up, dirty and torn, some years ago, in Lincoln's-inn Fields.

VIII.—Page 243.

I will beget a Son, and he shall bear
The sins of all the world.

A book is put into our hands when children, called the Bible, the purport of whose history is briefly this: That God made the earth in six days, and there planted a delightful garden, in which he placed the first pair of human beings. In the midst of the garden he planted a tree, whose fruit, although within their reach, they were forbidden to touch. That the Devil, in the shape of a snake, persuaded them to eat of this fruit; in consequence of which God condemned both them and their posterity yet unborn, to satisfy his justice by their eternal misery. That, four thousand years after these events, (the human race in the mean while having gone unredeemed to perdition,) God engendered with the betrothed wife of a carpenter in Judea, (whose virginity was nevertheless uninjured,) and begat a Son, whose name was Jesus Christ; and who was crucified and died, in order that no more men might be devoted to hell-fire, he bearing the burthen of his Father's displeasure by proxy. The book states in addition, that the soul of whoever disbelieves this sacrifice will be burned with everlasting fire.

During many ages of misery and darkness this story gained implicit belief; but at length men arose who suspected that it was a fable and imposture, and that

Jesus Christ, so far from being a God, was only a man like themselves. But a numerous set of men, who derived and still derive immense emoluments from this opinion, in the shape of a popular belief, told the vulgar, that, if they did not believe in the Bible, they would be damned to all eternity; and burned, imprisoned, and poisoned, all the unbiassed and unconnected inquirers who occasionally arose. They still oppress them, so far as the people, now become more enlightened, will allow.

The belief in all that the Bible contains is called Christianity. A Roman governor of Judea, at the instance of a priest-led mob, crucified a man called Jesus eighteen centuries ago. He was a man of pure life, who desired to rescue his countrymen from the tyranny of their barbarous and degrading superstitions. The common fate of all who desire to benefit mankind awaited him. The rabble, at the instigation of the priests, demanded his death, although his very judge made public acknowledgment of his innocence. Jesus was sacrificed to the honour of that God with whom he was afterwards confounded. It is of importance, therefore, to distinguish between the pretended character of this being as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, and his real character as a man, who, for a vain attempt to reform the world, paid the forfeit of his life to that overbearing tyranny which has since so long desolated the universe in his name.

Whilst the one is a hypocritical demon, who announces himself as the God of compassion and peace, even whilst he stretches forth his blood-red hand with the sword of discord to waste the earth, having confessedly devised this scheme of desolation from eternity, the other stands in the foremost list of those true heroes who have died in the glorious martyrdom of liberty, and have braved torture, contempt, and poverty, in the cause of suffering humanity.*

The vulgar, ever in extremes, became persuaded that the crucifixion of Jesus was a supernatural event. Testimonies of miracles, so frequent in unenlightened ages, were not wanting to prove that he was something divine. This belief, rolling through the lapse of ages, met with the reveries of Plato and the reasonings of Aristotle, and acquired force and extent, until the divinity of Jesus became a dogma, which to dispute was death, which to doubt was infamy.

Christianity is now the established religion: he, who attempts to impugn it, must be contented to behold murderers and traitors take precedence of him in public opinion; though, if his genius be equal to his courage, and assisted by a peculiar coalition of circumstances, future ages may exalt him to a divinity, and persecute others in his name, as he was perse-

* Since writing this note I have seen reason to suspect that Jesus was an ambitious man, who aspired to the throne of Judea.

cuted in the name of his predecessors in the homage of the world.

The same means that have supported every other popular belief have supported Christianity. War, imprisonment, assassination, and falsehood; deeds of unexampled and incomparable atrocity have made it what it is. The blood shed by the votaries of the God of mercy and peace, since the establishment of his religion, would probably suffice to drown all other sectaries now on the habitable globe. We derive from our ancestors a faith thus fostered and supported: we quarrel, persecute, and hate, for its maintenance. Even under a government which, whilst it infringes the very right of thought and speech, boasts of permitting the liberty of the press, a man is pilloried and imprisoned because he is a Deist, and no one raises his voice in the indignation of outraged humanity. But it is ever a proof that the falsehood of a proposition is felt by those who use coercion, not reasoning, to procure its admission; and a dispassionate observer would feel himself more powerfully interested in favour of a man, who, depending on the truth of his opinions, simply stated his reasons for entertaining them, than in that of his aggressor, who, daringly avowing his unwillingness or incapacity to answer them by argument, proceeded to repress the energies and break the spirit of their promulgator by that torture and imprisonment whose infliction he could command.

Analogy seems to favour the opinion, that, as, like other systems, Christianity has arisen and augmented, so like them it will decay and perish; that, as violence, darkness, and deceit, not reasoning and persuasion, have procured its admission among mankind, so, when enthusiasm has subsided, and time, that infallible controverter of false opinions has involved its pretended evidences in the darkness of antiquity, it will become obsolete; that Milton's poem alone will give permanency to the remembrance of its absurdities; and that men will laugh as heartily at grace, faith, redemption, and original sin, as they now do at the metamorphoses of Jupiter, the miracles of Romish saints, the efficacy of witchcraft, and the appearance of departed spirits.

Had the Christian religion commenced and continued by the mere force of reasoning and persuasion, the preceding analogy would be inadmissible. We should never speculate on the future obsoleteness of a system perfectly conformable to nature and reason: it would endure so long as they endured; it would be a truth as indisputable as the light of the sun, the criminality of murder, and other facts, whose evidence, depending on our organization and relative situations, must remain acknowledged as satisfactory so long as man is man. It is an incontrovertible fact, the consideration of which ought to repress the hasty conclusions of credulity, or moderate its obstinacy in maintaining them,

that, had the Jews not been a fanatical race of men, had even the resolution of Pontius Pilate been equal to his candour, the Christian religion never could have prevailed, it could not even have existed: on so feeble a thread hangs the most cherished opinion of a sixth of the human race! When will the vulgar learn humility? When will the pride of ignorance blush at having believed before it could comprehend?

Either the Christian religion is true or it is false: if true, it comes from God, and its authenticity can admit of doubt and dispute no further than its omnipotent author is willing to allow. Either the power or the goodness of God is called in question, if he leaves those doctrines most essential to the well being of man in doubt and dispute; the only ones which, since their promulgation, have been the subject of unceasing cavil, the cause of irreconcileable hatred. *If God has spoken, why is the universe not convinced?*

There is this passage in the Christian Scriptures: "Those who obey not God, and believe not the Gospel of his Son, shall be punished with everlasting destruction." This is the pivot upon which all religions turn: they all assume that it is in our power to believe or not to believe; whereas the mind can only believe that which it thinks true. A human being can only be supposed accountable for those actions which are influenced by his will. But belief is utterly distinct from and unconnected with volition: it is the appre-

hension of the agreement or disagreement of the ideas that compose any proposition. Belief is a passion, or involuntary operation of the mind, and, like other passions, its intensity is precisely proportionate to the degrees of excitement. Volition is essential to merit or demerit. But the Christian religion attaches the highest possible degrees of merit and demerit to that which is worthy of neither, and which is totally unconnected with the peculiar faculty of the mind, whose presence is essential to their being.

Christianity was intended to reform the world: had an all-wise Being planned it, nothing is more improbable than that it should have failed: omniscience would infallibly have foreseen the inutility of a scheme which experience demonstrates, to this age, to have been utterly unsuccessful.

Christianity inculcates the necessity of supplicating the Diety. Prayer may be considered under two points of view;—as an endeavour to change the intentions of God, or as a formal testimony of our obedience. But the former case supposes that the caprices of a limited intelligence can occasionally instruct the Creator of the world how to regulate the universe; and the latter, a certain degree of civility analogous to the loyalty demanded by earthly tyrants. Obedience indeed is only the pitiful and cowardly egotism of him who thinks that he can do something better than reason.

Christianity, like all other religions, rests upon miracles, prophecies, and martyrdoms. No religion ever existed which had not its prophets, its attested miracles, and, above all, crowds of devotees who would bear patiently the most horrible tortures to prove its authenticity. It should appear that in no case can a discriminating mind subscribe to the genuineness of a miracle. A miracle is an infraction of nature's law by a supernatural cause; by a cause acting beyond that eternal circle within which all things are included. God breaks through the law of nature, that he may convince mankind of the truth of that revelation which, in spite of his precautions, has been, since its introduction, the subject of unceasing schism and cavil.

Miracles resolve themselves into the following question:*—Whether it is more probable the laws of nature, hitherto so immutably harmonious, should have undergone violation, or that a man should have told a lie? Whether it is more probable that we are ignorant of the natural cause of an event, or that we know the supernatural one? That, in old times, when the powers of nature were less known than at present, a certain set of men were themselves deceived, or had some hidden motive for deceiving others; or that God begat a son, who, in his legislation, measuring merit

* See Hume's Essay, vol. ii. page 121.

by belief, evidenced himself to be totally ignorant of the powers of the human mind—of what is voluntary, and what is the contrary?

We have many instances of men telling lies;—none of an infraction of nature's laws, those laws of whose government alone we have any knowledge or experience. The records of all nations afford innumerable instances of men deceiving others either from vanity or interest, or themselves being deceived by the limitedness of their views and their ignorance of natural causes; but where is the accredited case of God having come upon earth, to give the lie to his own creations? There would be something truly wonderful in the appearance of a ghost: but the assertion of a child that he saw one as he passed through the churchyard is universally admitted to be less miraculous.

But even supposing that a man should raise a dead body to life before your eyes, and on this fact rest his claim to being considered the son of God, the Humane Society restores drowned persons, and as it makes no mystery of the method it employs, its members are not mistaken for the sons of God. All that we have a right to infer from our ignorance of the cause of any event is that we do not know it: had the Mexicans attended to this simple rule when they heard the cannon of the Spaniards, they would not have considered them as gods: the experiments of modern chemistry would have defied the wisest philosophers of ancient

Greece and Rome to have accounted for them on natural principles. An author of strong common sense has observed, that "a miracle is no miracle at second-hand;" he might have added, that a miracle is no miracle in any case; for, until we are acquainted with all natural causes, we have no reason to imagine others.

There remains to be considered another proof of Christianity—Prophecy. A book is written before a certain event, in which this event is foretold; how could the prophet have foreknown it without inspiration? how could he have been inspired without God? The greatest stress is laid on the prophecies of Moses and Hosea on the dispersion of the Jews, and that of Isaiah concerning the coming of the Messiah. The prophecy of Moses is a collection of every possible cursing and blessing; and it is so far from being marvellous that the one of dispersion should have been fulfilled, that it would have been more surprising if, out of all these, none should have taken effect. In Deuteronomy, chap. xxviii, ver. 64, where Moses explicitly foretells the dispersion, he states that they shall there serve gods of wood and stone: "And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even to the other, *and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even gods of wood and stone.*" The Jews are

at this day remarkably tenacious of their religion. Moses also declares that they shall be subjected to these causes for disobedience to his ritual: "And it shall come to pass, if thou will not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all the commandments and statutes which I command you this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee." Is this the real reason? The third, fourth, and fifth, chapters of Hosea are a piece of immodest confession. The indelicate type might apply in a hundred senses to a hundred things. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is more explicit, yet it does not exceed in clearness the oracles of Delphos. The historical proof, that Moses, Isaiah, and Hosea, did write when they are said to have written, is far from being clear and circumstantial.

But prophecy requires proof in its character as a miracle: we have no right to suppose that a man foreknew future events from God, until it is demonstrated that he neither could know them by his own exertions, nor that the writings which contain the prediction could possibly have been fabricated after the event pretended to be foretold. It is more probable that writings, pretending to divine inspiration, should have been fabricated after the fulfilment of their pretended prediction, than that they should have really been divinely inspired; when we consider that the latter supposition makes God at once the creator of

the human mind and ignorant of its primary powers, particularly as we have numberless instances of false religions, and forged prophecies of things long past, and no accredited case of God having conversed with men directly or indirectly. It is also possible that the description of an event might have foregone its occurrence; but this is far from being a legitimate proof of a divine revelation, as many men, not pretending to the character of a prophet, have nevertheless, in this sense, prophecied.

Lord Chesterfield was never yet taken for a prophet, even by a bishop, yet he uttered this remarkable prediction: "The despotic government of France is screwed up to the highest pitch; a revolution is fast approaching; that revolution, I am convinced, will be radical and sanguinary." This appeared in the letters of the prophet long before the accomplishment of this wonderful prediction. Now, have these particulars come to pass, or have they not? If they have, how could the Earl have foreknown them without inspiration? If we admit the truth of the Christian religion on testimony such as this, we must admit, on the same strength of evidence, that God has affixed the highest rewards to belief, and the eternal tortures of the never-dying worm to disbelief; both of which have been demonstrated to be involuntary.

The last proof of the Christian religion depends on the influence of the Holy Ghost. Theologians divide

the influence of the Holy Ghost into its ordinary and extraordinary modes of operation. The latter is supposed to be that which inspired the Prophets and Apostles; and the former to be the grace of God, which summarily makes known the truth of his revelation, to those whose minds are fitted for its reception by a submissive perusal of his word. Persons, convinced in this manner, can do any thing but account for their conviction, describe the time at which it happened, or the manner in which it came upon them. It is supposed to enter the mind by other channels than those of the senses, and therefore professes to be superior to reason founded on their experience.

Admitting, however, the usefulness or possibility of a divine revelation, unless we demolish the foundations of all human knowledge, it is requisite that our reason should previously demonstrate its genuineness; for, before we extinguish the steady ray of reason and common sense, it is fit that we should discover whether we cannot do without their assistance, whether or no there be any other which may suffice to guide us through the labyrinth of life:* for, if a man is to be inspired upon all occasions, if he is to be sure of a thing because he is sure, if the ordinary operations of the spirit are not to be considered very extraordinary modes of demonstration, if enthusiasm is to usurp the place of proof, and

* See Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, book iv. chap xix. on Enthusiasm.

madness that of sanity, all reasoning is superfluous. The Mahometan dies fighting for his prophet, the Indian immolates himself at the chariot-wheels of Brahma, the Hottentot worships an insect, the Negro a bunch of feathers, the Mexican sacrifices human victims! Their degree of conviction must certainly be very strong: it cannot arise from conviction, it must from feelings, the reward of their prayers. If each of these should affirm, in opposition to the strongest possible arguments, that inspiration carried internal evidence, I fear their inspired brethren, the orthodox Missionaries, would be so uncharitable as to pronounce them obstinate.

Miracles cannot be received as testimonies of a disputed fact, because all human testimony has ever been insufficient to establish the possibility of miracles. That, which is incapable of proof itself, is no proof of any thing else. Prophecy has also been rejected by the test of reason. Those, then, who have been actually inspired, are the only true believers in the Christian religion.

Mox numine viso
Virginei tumuere sinus, innuptaque mater
Arcano stupuit compleri viscera partu,
Auctorem paritura suum. Mortalia corda
Artificem texere poli, latuitque sub uno
Pectore, qui totum late complectitur orbem.

Claudiani, Carmen Paschale.

Does not so monstrous and disgusting an absurdity carry its own infamy and refutation with itself? ☞

VIII.—Page 254.

Him, (still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing,
Which, from the exhaustless lore of human weal
Dawns on the virtuous mind) the thoughts that rise
In time-destroying infiniteness, gift
With self-enshrined eternity, &c.

Time is our consciousness of the succession of ideas in our mind. Vivid sensation, of either pain or pleasure, makes the time seem long, as the common phrase is, because it renders us more acutely conscious of our ideas. If a mind be conscious of a hundred ideas during one minute by the clock, and of two hundred during another, the latter of these spaces would actually occupy so much greater extent in the mind as two exceed one in quantity. If, therefore, the human mind, by any future improvement of its sensibility, should become conscious of an infinite number of ideas in a minute, that minute would be eternity. I do not hence infer that the actual space between the birth and death of a man will ever be prolonged; but that his sensibility is perfectible, and that the number of ideas which his mind is capable of receiving is indefinite. One man is stretched on the rack during twelve hours, another sleeps soundly in his bed: the difference of time

perceived by these two persons is immense; one hardly will believe that half an hour has elapsed, the other could credit that centuries had flown during his agony. Thus the life of a man of virtue and talent, who should die in his thirtieth year, is, with regard to his own feelings, longer than that of a miserable priest-ridden slave, who dreams out a century of dullness. The one has perpetually cultivated his mental faculties, has rendered himself master of his thoughts, can abstract and generalize amid the lethargy of every-day business;—the other can slumber over the brightest moments of his being, and is unable to remember the happiest hour of his life. Perhaps the perishing ephemeron enjoys a longer life than the tortoise.

Dark flood of time!
Roll as it listeth thee—I measure not
By months or moments thy ambiguous course.
Another may stand by me on the brink,
And watch the bubble whirled beyond his ken
That pauses at my feet. The sense of love,
The thirst for action, and the impassioned thought,
Prolong my being: if I wake no more,
My life more actual living will contain
Than some grey veterans' of the world's cold school,
Whose listless hours unprofitably roll,
By one enthusiast feeling unredeemed

See Godwin's Pol. Just. vol. i. page 411 ;—

and Condorcet, Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progres de l'Esprit Humain, Epoque ix.

VIII.—Page 254.

No longer now
He slays the lamb that looks him in the face.

I hold that the depravity of the physical and moral nature of man originated in his unnatural habits of life. The origin of man, like that of the universe of which he is a part, is enveloped in impenetrable mystery. His generations either had a beginning, or they had not. The weight of evidence in favour of each of these suppositions seems tolerably equal; and it is perfectly unimportant to the present argument which is assumed. The language spoken however by the mythology of nearly all religions seems to prove, that at some distant period man forsook the path of nature, and sacrificed the purity and happiness of his being to unnatural appetites. The date of this event seems to have also been that of some great change in the climates of the earth, with which it has an obvious correspondence. The allegory of Adam and Eve eating of the tree of evil, and entailing upon their posterity the wrath of God and the loss of everlasting life, admits of no other explanation than the disease and crime that have flowed from unnatural diet. Milton was so well aware of this, that he

makes Raphael thus exhibit to Adam the consequence of his disobedience.

——————Immediately a place
Before his eyes appear'd, sad, noisome, dark,
A lazar-house it seem'd, wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased, all maladies
Of ghastly spasm or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
Intestine stone and ulcer, cholic pangs,
Dæmoniac frenzy, moping melancholy,
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,
Dropsies, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.

And how many thousands more might not be added to this frightful catalogue!

The story of Prometheus is one likewise which, although universally admitted to be allegorical, has never been satisfactorily explained. Prometheus stole fire from heaven, and was chained for this crime to mount Caucasus, where a vulture continually devoured his liver, that grew to meet its hunger. Hesiod says, that, before the time of Prometheus, mankind were exempt from suffering; that they enjoyed a vigorous youth, and that death, when at length it came, approached like sleep, and gently closed their eyes. Again, so general

was this opinion, that Horace, a poet of the Augustan age, writes—

> Audax omnia perpeti,
> Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas.
> Audax Iapeti genus
> Ignem fraude mala gentibus intulit:
> Post ignem ætheriâ domo
> Subductum, macies et nova febrium
> Terris incubuit cohors,
> Semotique prius tarda necessitas
> Lethi corripuit gradum.

How plain a language is spoken by all this! Prometheus (who represents the human race) effected some great change in the condition of his nature, and applied fire to culinary purposes; thus inventing an expedient for screening from his disgust the horrors of the shambles. From this moment his vitals were devoured by the vulture of disease. It consumed his being in every shape of its loathsome and infinite variety, inducing the soul-quelling sinkings of premature and violent death. All vice arose from the ruin of healthful innocence.—Tyranny, superstition, commerce, and inequality, were then first known, when reason vainly attempted to guide the wanderings of exacerbated passion. I conclude this part of the subject with an abstract from Mr. Newland's Defence of Vegetable Regimen, from

whom I have borrowed this interpretation of the fable of Prometheus.

"Making allowance for such transposition of the events of the allegory as time might produce after the important truths were forgotten, which this portion of the ancient mythology was intended to transmit, the drift of the fable seems to be this:—Man at his creation was endowed with the gift of perpetual youth; that is, he was not formed to be a sickly suffering creature as we now see him, but to enjoy health, and to sink by slow degrees into the bosom of his parent earth without disease or pain. Prometheus first taught the use of animal food (primus bovem occidit Prometheus*) and of fire, with which to render it more digestible and pleasing to the taste. Jupiter, and the rest of the gods, foreseeing the consequences of these inventions, were amused or irritated at the short-sighted devices of the newly-formed creature, and left him to experience the sad effects of them. Thirst, the necessary concomitant of a flesh diet," (perhaps of all diet vitiated by culinary preparation,) "ensued; water was resorted to, and man forfeited the inestimable gift of health which he had received from heaven: he became diseased, the partaker of a precarious existence, and no longer descended slowly to his grave."†

* Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. vii. sect. 57.

† Return to Nature.—Cadell, 1811.

But just disease to luxury succeeds,
And every death its own avenger breeds.
The fury passions from that blood began,
And turned on man a fiercer savage—man.

Man, and the animals whom he has infected with his society or depraved by his dominion, are alone diseased. The wild hog, the mouflon, the bison, and the wolf, are perfectly exempt from malady, and invariably die either from external violence or natural old age. But the domestic hog, the sheep, the cow, and the dog, are subject to an incredible variety of distempers; and, like the corrupters of their nature, have physicians who thrive upon their miseries. The supereminence of man is like Satan's, a supereminence of pain; and the majority of his species, doomed to penury, disease, and crime, have reason to curse the untoward event, that, by enabling him to communicate his sensations, raised him above the level of his fellow animals. But the steps that have been taken are irrevocable. The whole of human science is comprised in one question:—How can the advantages of intellect and civilization be reconciled with the liberty and pure pleasures of natural life? How can we take the benefits, and reject the evils, of the system which is now interwoven with all the fibres of our being?—I believe that abstinence from animal food and spirituous liquors would in a great measure capacitate us for the solution of this important question.

It is true, that mental and bodily derangement is attributable in part to other deviations from rectitude and nature than those which concern diet. The mistakes cherished by society respecting the connection of the sexes, whence the misery and diseases of unsatisfied celibacy, unenjoying prostitution, and the premature arrival of puberty, necessarily spring; the putrid atmosphere of crowded cities; the exhalations of chemical processes; the muffling of our bodies in superfluous apparel; the absurd treatment of infants;—all these, and innumerable other, causes contribute their mite to the mass of human evil.

Comparative anatomy teaches us that man resembles frugivorous animals in every thing, and carnivorous in nothing; he has neither claws wherewith to seize his prey, nor distinct and pointed teeth to tear the living fibre. A Mandarin of the first class, with nails two inches long, would probably find them alone inefficient to hold even a hare. After every subterfuge of gluttony, the bull must be degraded into the ox, and the ram into the wether, by an unnatural and inhuman operation, that the flaccid fibre may offer a fainter resistance to rebellious nature. It is only by softening and disguising dead flesh by culinary preparation, that it is rendered susceptible of mastication or digestion; and that the sight of its bloody juices and raw horror does not excite intolerable loathing and disgust. Let the advocate of animal food force himself to a decisive experiment on

its fitness, and, as Plutarch recommends, tear a living lamb with his teeth, and, plunging his head into its vitals, slake his thirst with the steaming blood; when fresh from the deed of horror, let him revert to the irresistible instinct of nature that would rise in judgment against it, and say, Nature formed me for such work as this. Then, and then only, would he be consistent.

Man resembles no carnivorous animal. There is no exception, unless man be one, to the rule of herbivorous animals having cellulated colons.

The orang-outang perfectly resembles man both in the order and number of his teeth. The orang-outang is the most anthropomorphous of the ape tribe, all of which are strictly frugivorous. There is no other species of animals, which live on different food, in which this analogy exists.* In many frugivorous animals, the canine teeth are more pointed and distinct than those of man. The resemblance also of the human stomach to that of the orang-outang is greater than to that of any other animal.

The intestines are also identical with those of herbivorous animals, which present a larger surface for absorption, and have ample and cellulated colons. The cœcum also, though short, is larger than that of carnivolous animals; and even here the orang-outang retains its accustomed similarity.

* Cuvier, Legons d'Anat. Comp. tom. iii, pages 169, 373, 448, 465, 480. Rees's Cyclopædia, article Man.

The structure of the human frame then is that of one fitted to a pure vegetable diet, in every essential particular. It is true, that the reluctance to abstain from animal food, in those who have been long accustomed to its stimulus, is so great in some persons of weak minds, as to be scarcely overcome; but this is far from bringing any argument in its favour. A lamb, which was fed for some time on flesh by a ship's crew, refused its natural diet at the end of the voyage. There are numerous instances of horses, sheep, oxen, and even wood-pigeons, having been taught to live upon flesh, until they have loathed their natural aliment. Young children evidently prefer pastry, oranges, apples, and other fruit, to the flesh of animals; until, by the gradual depravation of the digestive organs, the free use of vegetables has for a time produced serious inconveniences; *for a time* I say, since there never was an instance wherein a change, from spirituous liquors and animal food to vegetables and pure water, has failed ultimately to invigorate the body, by rendering its juices bland and consentaneous, and to restore to the mind that cheerfulness and elasticity which not one in fifty possesses on the present system. A love of strong liquors is also with difficulty taught to infants. Almost every one remembers the wry faces which the first glass of port produced. Unsophisticated instinct is invariably unerring; but, to decide on the fitness of animal food from the perverted appetites which its constrained adoption produces,

is to make the criminal a judge of his own cause; it is even worse; it is appealing to the infatuated drunkard in a question of the salubrity of brandy.

What is the cause of morbid action in the animal system? Not the air we breathe, for our fellow-denizens of nature breathe the same uninjured, (if remote from the pollutions of man and his inventions,*) for the animals drink it too; not the earth we tread upon; not the unobscured sight of glorious nature, in the wood, the field, or the expanse of sky and ocean; nothing that we are or do in common with the undiseased inhabitants of the forest; but something then wherein we differ from them; our habit of altering our food by fire, so that our appetite is no longer a just criterion for the fitness of its gratification. Except in children there remains no traces of that instinct which determines, in all other animals, what aliment is natural or otherwise; and so perfectly obliterated are they in the reasoning adults of our species, that it has become necessary to urge considerations drawn from comparative anatomy to prove that we are naturally frugivorous.

Crime is madness. Madness is disease. Whenever

* The necessity of resorting to some means of purifying water, and the diseases which arise from its adulteration in civilized countries, are sufficiently apparent.—See Dr. Lambe's Reports on Cancer. I do not assert that the use of water is in itself unnatural, but that the unperverted palate would swallow no liquid capable of occasioning disease.

the cause of disease shall be discovered, the root, from which all vice and misery have so long overshadowed the globe, will lie bare to the axe. All the exertions of man, from that moment, may be considered as tending to the clear profit of his species. No sane mind in a sane body resolves upon a real crime. It is a man of violent passions, blood-shoot eyes, and swollen veins, that alone can grasp the knife of murder. The system of a simple diet promises no Utopian advantages. It is no mere reform of legislation, whilst the furious passions and evil propensities of the human heart, in which it had its origin, are still unassuaged. It strikes at the root of all evil, and is an experiment which may be tried with success, not alone by nations, but by small societies, families, and even individuals. In no cases has a return to vegetable diet produced the slightest injury; in most it has been attended with changes undeniably beneficial. Should ever a physician be born with the genius of Locke, I am persuaded that he might trace all bodily and mental derangements to our unnatural habits, as clearly as that philosopher has traced all knowledge to sensation. What prolific sources of disease are not those mineral and vegetable poisons that have been introduced for its extirpation! How many thousands have become murderers and robbers, bigots and domestic tyrants, dissolute and abandoned adventurers, from the use of fermented liquors! who, had they slaked their thirst only with pure water, would have lived but to diffuse the happi-

ness of their own unperverted feelings! How many groundless opinions and absurd institutions have received a general sanction from the sottishness and the intemperance of individuals! Who will assert that, had the populace of Paris satisfied their hunger at the ever-furnished table of vegetable nature, they would have lent their brutal suffrage to the proscription-list of Robespierre? Could a set of men, whose passions were not perverted by unnatural stimuli, look with coolness on an *auto da fé?* Is it to be believed that a being of gentle feelings, rising from his meal of roots, would take delight in sports of blood? Was Nero a man of temperate life? Could you read calm health in his cheek, flushed with ungovernable propensities of hatred for the human race? Did Muley Ismael's pulse beat evenly, was his skin transparent, did his eyes beam with healthfulness, and its invariable concomitants, cheerfulness and benignity? Though history has decided none of these questions, a child could not hesitate to answer in the negative. Surely the bile-suffused cheek of Buonaparte, his wrinkled brow, and yellow eye, the ceaseless inquietude of his nervous system, speak no less plainly the character of his unresting ambition than his murders and his victories. It is impossible, had Buonaparte descended from a race of vegetable feeders, that he could have had either the inclination or the power to ascend the throne of the Bourbons. The desire of tyranny could scarcely be

excited in the individual, the power to tyrannize would certainly not be delegated by a society neither frenzied by inebriation nor rendered impotent and irrational by disease. Pregnant indeed with inexhaustible calamity is the renunciation of instinct, as it concerns our physical nature; arithmetic cannot enumerate, nor reason perhaps suspect, the multitudinous sources of disease in civilized life. Even common water, that apparently innoxious pabulum, when corrupted by the filth of populous cities, is a deadly and insidious destroyer.* Who can wonder that all the inducements held out by God himself in the Bible to virtue should have been vainer than a nurse's tale; and that those dogmas, by which he has there excited and justified the most ferocious propensities, should have alone been deemed essential; whilst Christians are in the daily practice of all those habits which have infected with disease and crime, not only the reprobate sons but these favoured children of the common Father's love? Omnipotence itself could not save them from the consequences of this original and universal sin.

There is no disease, bodily or mental, which adoption of vegetable diet and pure water has not infallibly mitigated, wherever the experiment has been fairly tried. Debility is gradually converted into strength, disease into healthfulness; madness, in all its hideous

* Lambe's Reports on Cancer.

variety, from the ravings of the fettered maniac to the unaccountable irrationalities of ill temper, that make a hell of domestic life, into a calm and considerate evenness of temper, that alone might offer a certain pledge of the future moral reformation of society. On a natural system of diet, old age would be our last and our only malady; the term of our existence would be protracted; we should enjoy life, and no longer preclude others from the enjoyment of it; all sensational delights would be infinitely more exquisite and perfect; the very sense of being would then be a continued pleasure, such as we now feel it in some few and favoured moments of our youth. By all that is sacred in our hopes for the human race, I conjure those who love happiness and truth to give a fair trial to the vegetable system. Reasoning is surely superfluous on a subject whose merits an experience of six months would set for ever at rest. But it is only among the enlightened and benevoient that so great a sacrifice of appetite and prejudice can be expected, even though its ultimate excellence should not admit of dispute. It is found easier, by the short-sighted victims of disease, to palliate their torments by medicine, than to prevent them by regimen. The vulgar of all ranks are invariably sensual and in docile; yet I cannot but feel myself persuaded that, when the benefits of vegetable diet are mathematically proved; when it is as clear, that those who live

naturally are exempt from premature death, as that one is not nine, the most sottish of mankind will feel a preference towards a long and tranquil, contrasted with a short and painful, life. On the average, out of sixty persons, four die in three years. Hopes are entertained that, in April, 1814, a statement will be given, that sixty persons, all having lived more than three years on vegetables and pure water, are then *in perfect health*. More than two years have now elapsed; *not one of them has died;* no such example will be found in any sixty persons taken at random. Seventeen persons of all ages (the families of Dr. Lambe and Mr. Newton) have lived for seven years on this diet without a death, and almost without the slightest illness. Surely, when we consider that some of these were infants, and one a martyr to asthma, now nearly subdued, we may challenge any seventeen persons taken at random in this city to exhibit a parallel case. Those, who may have been excited to question the rectitude of established habits of diet by these loose remarks, should consult Mr. Newton's luminous and eloquent essay.*

When these proofs come fairly before the world, and are clearly seen by all who understand arithmetic, it is scarcely possible that abstinence from aliment demonstrably pernicious should not become universal.—In proportion to the number of proselytes, so will be

* Return to Nature, or Defence of Vegetable Regimen. Cadell, 1811.

the weight of evidence; and, when a thousand persons can be produced, living on vegetables and distilled water, who have to dread no disease but old age, the world will be compelled to regard animal flesh and fermented liquors as slow but certain poisons. The change which would be produced by simpler habits on political economy is sufficiently remarkable. The monopolizing eater of animal flesh would no longer destroy his constitution by devouring an acre at a meal, and many loaves of bread would cease to contribute to gout, madness, and apoplexy, in the shape of a pint of porter, or a dram of gin, when appeasing the long-protracted famine of the hard-working peasant's hungry babes. The quantity of nutritious vegetable matter, consumed in fattening the carcase of an ox, would afford ten times the sustenance, undepraving indeed, and incapable of generating disease, if gathered immediately from the bosom of the earth. The most fertile districts of the habitable globe are now actually cultivated by men for animals, at a delay and waste of aliment absolutely incapable of calculation. It is only the wealthy that can, to any great degree, even now, indulge the unnatural craving for dead flesh, and they pay for the greater licence of the privilege by subjection to supernumerary diseases. Again, the spirit of the nation, that should take the lead in this great reform, would insensibly become agricultural; commerce, with all its vice, selfishness, and corruption, would gradually decline; more natural habits would produce gentler manners, and the exces-

sive complication of political relations would be so far simplified, that every individual might feel and understand why he loved his country, and took a personal interest in its welfare. How would England, for example, depend on the caprices of foreign rulers, if she contained within herself all the necessaries, and despised whatever they possessed of the luxuries, of life? How could they starve her into compliance with their views? Of what consequence would it be that they refused to take her woollen manufactures, when large and fertile tracts of the island ceased to be allotted to the waste of pasturage? On a natural system of diet, we should require no spices from India; no wines from Portugal, Spain, France, or Madeira; none of those multitudinous articles of luxury, for which every corner of the globe is rifled, and which are the causes of so much individual rivalship, such calamitous and sanguinary national disputes. In the history of modern times, the avarice of commercial monopoly, no less than the ambition of weak and wicked chiefs, seems to have fomented the universal discord, to have added stubbornness to the mistakes of cabinets, and indocility to the infatuation of the people. Let it ever be remembered, that it is the direct influence of commerce to make the interval between the richest and the poorest man wider and more unconquerable. Let it be remembered, that it is a foe to every thing of real worth and excellence in the human character. The odious and disgusting aristocracy of wealth is built upon the ruins of all that is good in chi-

valry or republicanism; and luxury is the forerunner of a barbarism scarce capable of cure. Is it impossible to realize a state of society, where all the energies of man shall be directed to the production of his solid happiness? Certainly, if this advantage (the object of all political speculation) be in any degree attainable, it is attainable only by a community which holds no factitious incentives to the avarice and ambition of the few, and which is internally organized for the liberty, security, and comfort, of the many. None must be intrusted with power (and money is the completest species of power) who do not stand pledged to use it exclusively for the general benefit. But the use of animal flesh and fermented liquors directly militates with this equality of the rights of man. The peasant cannot gratify these fashionable cravings without leaving his family to starve. Without disease and war, those sweeping curtailers of population, pasturage would include a waste too great to be afforded. The labour requisite to support a family is far lighter* than is usually sup-

* It has come under the author's experience, that some of the workmen on an embankment in North Wales, who, in consequence of the inability of the proprietor to pay them, seldom received their wages, have supported large families by cultivating small spots of sterile ground by moonlight. In the notes to Pratt's poem, "Bread, or the Poor," is an account of an industrious labourer, who, by working in a small garden, before and after his day's task, attained to an enviable state of independence.

posed. The peasantry work, not only for themselves, but for the aristocracy, the army, and the manufacturers.

The advantage of a reform in diet is obviously greater than that of any other. It strikes at the root of the evil. To remedy the abuses of legislation, before we annihilate the propensities by which they are produced, is to suppose, that, by taking away the effect, the cause will cease to operate. But the efficacy of this system depends entirely on the proselytism of individuals, and grounds its merits, as a benefit to the community, upon the total change of the dietetic habits in its members. It proceeds securely from a number of particular cases to one that is universal, and has this advantage over the contrary mode, that one error does not invalidate all that has gone before.

Let not too much however be expected from this system. The healthiest among us is not exempt from hereditary disease. The most symmetrical, athletic, and long-lived, is a being inexpressibly inferior to what he would have been, had not the unnatural habits of his ancestors accumulated for him a certain portion of malady and deformity. In the most perfect specimen of civilized man, something is still found wanting by the physiological critic. Can a return to nature, then, instantaneously eradicate predispositions that have been slowly taking root in the silence of innumerable ages? —Indubitably not. All that I contend for is, that, from

the moment of relinquishing all unnatural habits, no new disease is generated; and that the predisposition to hereditary maladies gradually perishes for want of its accustomed supply. In cases of consumption, cancer, gout, asthma, and scrofula, such is the invariable tendency of a diet of vegetables and pure water.

Those who may be induced by these remarks to give the vegetable system a fair trial should, in the first place, date the commencement of their practice from the moment of their conviction. All depends upon breaking through a pernicious habit resolutely and at once. Dr. Trotter* asserts, that no drunkard was ever reformed by gradually relinquishing his dram. Animal flesh, in its effects on the human stomach, is analogous to a dram. It is similar to the kind, though differing in the degree, of its operation. The proselyte to pure diet must be warned to expect a temporary diminution of muscular strength. The subtraction of a powerful stimulus will suffice to account for this event. But it is only temporary, and is succeeded by an equable capability for exertion, far surpassing his former various and fluctuating strength. Above all, he will acquire an easiness of breathing, by which such exertion is performed, with a remarkable exemption from that painful and difficult panting now felt by almost every one after hastily climbing an ordinary mountain. He will

* See Trotter on the Nervous Temperament.

be equally capable of bodily exertion, or mental application, after as before his simple meal. He will feel none of the narcotic effects of ordinary diet. Irritability, the direct consequence of exhausting stimuli, would yield to the power of natural and tranquil impulses. He will no longer pine under the lethargy of ennui, that unconquerable weariness of life more to be dreaded than death itself. He will escape the epidemic madness which broods over its own injurious notions of the Deity, and "realizes the hell that priests and beldams feign." Every man forms as it were his god from his own character; to the divinity of one of simple habits no offering would be more acceptable than the happiness of his creatures. He would be incapable of hating or persecuting others for the love of God. He will find, moreover, a system of simple diet to be a system of perfect epicurism. He will no longer be incessantly occupied in blunting and destroying those organs from which he expects his gratification. The pleasures of taste to be derived from a dinner of potatoes, beans, peas, turnips, lettuces, with a dessert of apples, gooseberries, strawberries, currants, raspberries, and, in winter, oranges, apples, and pears, is far greater than is supposed. Those who wait until they can eat this plain fare with the sauce of appetite will scarcely join with the hypocritical sensualist at a lord-mayor's feast, who declaims against the pleasures of the table. Solomon kept a thousand concubines, and owned in

despair that all was vanity. The man, whose happiness is constituted by the society of one amiable woman, would find some difficulty in sympathizing with the disappointment of this venerable debauchee.

I address myself not only to the young enthusiast, but the ardent devotee of truth and virtue, the pure and passionate moralist, yet unvitiated by the contagion of the world. He will embrace a pure system from its abstract truth, its beauty, its simplicity, and its promise of wide-extended benefit; unless custom has turned poison into food, he will hate the brutal pleasures of the chase by instinct; it will be a contemplation full of horror and disappointment to his mind, that beings, capable of the gentlest and most admirable sympathies, should take delight in the death-pangs and last convulsions of dying animals. The elderly man, whose youth has been poisoned by intemperance, or who has lived with apparent moderation, and is afflicted with a variety of painful maladies, would find his account in a beneficial change produced without the risk of poisonous medicines. The mother, to whom the perpetual restlessness of disease, and unaccountable deaths incident to her childeren, are the causes of incurable unhappiness, would on this diet experience the satisfaction of beholding their perpetual health and natural playfulness.* The most valuable lives are daily destroyed by

* See Mr. Newton's book. His children are the most beautiful and healthy creatures it is possible to conceive; the

diseases, that it is dangerous to palliate and impossible to cure by medicine. How much longer will man continue to pimp for the gluttony of death, his most insidious, implacable, and eternal, foe?

Ἄλλα δρακώντας ἀγριοὺς καλεῖτε καὶ παρδελεῖς καὶ λέοντας, αὐτοὶ δὲ μιαφονεῖτε· εἰς ὠμότητα καταλιπόντες ἐκείνους ἐδέν. ὐκείνοις μὲν ὁ φόνος τροφὴ, ἡμῖν δὲ ὄψον ἐστίν.

* * * * * * *

Οτι γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν ανθρώπῳ κατὰ φὺσιν τὸ σαρκοφαγεῖν, πρῶτον μὲν ἀπὸ των σωμάτων δηλοῦται τῆς κατασκεῦης. Οὐδεν γὰρ ἔοικε τὸ ἀνθρωπε σῶμα των επὶ σαρκοφαγία γεγονότων, ὦ, χρωπότης, χείλες, οὐκ ὀξύτης ὄνυχος ὲ τραχύτης ὀδόντων πρόσεστιν, ὲ κοιλίας ευτονια, καὶ πνέυματος θερμὸτης, τρὲψαι, καὶ κατεργάσασθαι δυνατὴ τό βαρὺ καὶ πρεῶδες; ἀλλ' αὐτόθεν ἡ φύσις τῆ λειότητι των ὀδόντων, καὶ τῆ σμικρότητι τὲ στοματος, καὶ τῆ μαλακότητι τῆς γλώσσης, καὶ τῆ προς πέψιν ἀμβλύτητι τε πνέυματος, ἐξόμνυται

girls are perfect models for a sculptor; their dispositions are also the most gentle and conciliating; the judicious treatment, which they experience in other points, may be a correlative cause of this. In the first five years of their life, of 18,000 children that are born, 7,500 die of various dieases; and how many more of those that survive are not rendered miserable by maladies not immediately mortal? The quality and quantity of a woman's milk are materially injured by the use of dead flesh. In an island near Iceland, where no vegetables are to be got, the children invariably die of tetanus before they are three weeks old, and the population is supplied from the main land.—*Sir G. Mackenzie's History of Iceland.* See also *Emile*, chap. i. pages 53, 54, 56.

τὴν σαρκοφαγιάν. Εἰ δὲ λεγείς τεφυκέναι σεαυτὸν ἐπί τοιαύτην ἐδώδην, ὃ βέλει φαγεῖν, πρῶτον αὐτὸς ἀπόκτεινον. ἀλλ' αὐτός, διὰ σεαυτοῦ μὴ χρησάμενος κοπίδι, μηδὲ τυμπάνῳ μηδὲ πελέκει. ἀλλὰ ὡς λύκοι, καὶ ἄρκτοι καὶ λέοντες αὐτόι ὡς ἐσθιοῦσι φόνευσον, ἄνελε δήγματι βοῦν, ἢ σώματι οὖν, ἢ ἄρνα ἢ λαγῶον διάῤῥηξον, καὶ φάγε προσπεσών· ἔτι ζῶντος ὡς ἐκεῖνα.

* * * * * * *

Ημεῖς δὲ ὕστος ἐν τῷ μιαιφόνῳ τρυφῶμεν, ὥστε ὄψον τὸ κρέας προσαγορεύομεν, εἶτα ὄψων προς ἀυλὸ τὸ κρέας δέομεθα, ἀναμιγνύντες ἔλαιον, οἶνον, μέλι, γάρον, ὄξος, ἢ δύσμασι Συριακοῖς. Ἀρραβικοῖς, ὡς περ ὄντως νεκρὸν, ἐνταφιάζοντες. Καὶ γὰρ ὄντως αὐτων διαλυθέντως καὶ μαλαχθέντων καί τρόπον τινά κρυσταπέυντων ἔργον ἐστι τὴν πέψιν κρατῆσαι καὶ διακρατηθείσης δὲ δεινάς βαρύτητας ἐμποιεῖ καὶ νοσώδεις απεψιάς.

Οὕτω τὸ πρῶτον ἀγριόν τι ζῶον ἐβρώθη καὶ κακέργον εἶτα ὄρνις τις ἢ ἰχθύς ἑιλκυστο· καὶ γεύομενον, ὅτο καὶ προμελετῆσαν εν ἐκείνοις τὸ νικᾶν ἐπι βοῦν ἐργάτην ἦλθε, καὶ τὸ κοσμον πρόβατον καὶ τὸν οἰκεῖον ἀλεκτρύονα· καὶ καταμικρὸν ὅτο τὴν απλησιάν τονώσαντες, ἐπίσφαγὰς ἀνθρωπων, καὶ φόνες καὶ πολέμους προῆλθον.

Πλουτ. περι της σαρκοφαγιας.

THE END OF QUEEN MAB.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND,

A LYRICAL DRAMA,

IN FOUR ACTS.

BY

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

Audisne hæc, Amphiarae, sub terram abdite?

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PREFACE.

THE Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation, or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian story was exhibited on the Athenian theatre with as many variations as dramas.

I have presumed to employ a similar licence. The "Prometheus Unbound" of Æschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus, and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules. Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to re-

store the lost drama of Æschylus; an ambition, which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited to me cherish, the recollection of the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary. The only imaginary being, resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgment, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandizement, which, in the Hero of Paradise Lost, interfere with the interest. The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those, who consider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling, it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends.

This Poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever-winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama.

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakspeare are full of instances of the same kind: Dante indeed more than any other poet, and with greater success. But the Greek poets, as writers to whom no resource of awakening the sympathy of their contemporaries was unknown, were in the habitual use of this power; and it is the study of their works, (since a higher merit would probably be denied me,) to which I am willing that my readers should impute this singularity.

One word is due in candour to the degree in which the study of contemporary writings may have tinged my composition, for such has been a topic of censure with regard to poems far more popular, and indeed

more deservedly, popular than mine. It is impossible that any one who inhabits the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the productions of those extraordinary intellects. It is true, that, not the spirit of their genius, but the forms in which it has manifested itself, are due less to the peculiarities of their own minds than to the peculiarity of the moral and intellectual condition of the minds among which they have been produced. Thus a number of writers possess the form, whilst they want the spirit of those whom, it is alleged, they imitate; because the former is the endowment of the age in which they live, and the latter must be the uncommunicated lightning of their own mind.

The peculiar style of intense and comprehensive imagery which distinguishes the modern literature of England has not been, as a general power, the product of the imitation of any particular writer. The mass of capabilities remains at every period materially the same: the circumstances which awaken it to action perpetually change. If England were divided into forty republics, each equal in population and extent to Athens, there is no reason to suppose but that, under institutions not more perfect than those of Athens, each would produce philosophers and poets

equal to those who (if we except Shakspeare) have never been surpassed. We owe the great writers of the golden age of our literature to that fervid awakening of the public mind which shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christian religion. We owe Milton to the progress and developement of the same spirit: the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a republican, and a bold inquirer into morals and religion. The great writers of our own age are, we have reason to suppose, the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition, or the opinions which cement it. The cloud of mind is discharging its collected lightning, and the equilibrium between institutions and opinions is now restoring, or is about to be restored.

As to imitation, poetry is a mimetic art. It creates, but it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the contemporary condition of them: one great poet is a masterpiece of nature which another not only ought to study but must study. He might as wisely and as easily determine that his mind should no longer be the mirror of all that is lovely in the visible universe as

exclude from his contemplation the beautiful which exists in the writings of a great contemporary. The pretence of doing it would be a presumption in any but the greatest; the effect, even in him, would be strained, unnatural, and ineffectual. A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others; and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both. Every man's mind is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of nature and art; by every word and every suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors, and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and, in another, the creations, of their age. From this suggestion the loftiest do not escape. There is a similarity between Homer and Hesiod, between Æschylus and Euripides, between Virgil and Horace, between Dante and Petrarch, between Shakspeare and Fletcher, between Dryden and Pope; each has a generic resemblance under which their specific distinctions are arranged. If this similarity be the result of imitation, I am willing to confess that I have imitated.

Let this opportunity be conceded to me of acknowledging that I have, what a Scotch philosopher characteristically terms, "a passion for reforming the world:" what passion incited him to write and pub-

lish his book, he omits to explain. For my part I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus. But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence; nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse. My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarize the highly-refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that, until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness. Should I live to accomplish what I purpose, that is, produce a systematical history of what appear to me to be the genuine elements of human society, let not the advocates of injustice and superstition flatter themselves that I should take Æschylus rather than Plato as my model.

The having spoken of myself with unaffected freedom will need little apology with the candid; and let the uncandid consider that they injure me less than their own hearts and minds by misrepresentation.

Whatever talents a person may possess to amuse and instruct others, be they ever so inconsiderable, he is yet bound to exert them: if his attempt be ineffectual, let the punishment of an unaccomplished purpose have been sufficient; let none trouble themselves to heap the dust of oblivion upon his efforts; the pile they raise will betray his grave, which might otherwise have been unknown.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

written in Italy, 1818.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Prometheus.	Asia. }
Demogorgon.	Panthea. } Oceanides.
Jupiter.	Ione }
The Earth.	The Phantasm of Jupiter.
Ocean.	The Spirit of the Earth.
Apollo.	Spirits of the Hours.
Mercury.	Spirits. Echoes. Fawns.
Hercules.	Furies.

ACT I.

Scene, a ravine of icy rocks in the Indian Caucasus. Prometheus *is discovered bound to the precipice.* Panthea *and* Ione *are seated by his feet. Time, night. During the scene, morning slowly breaks.*

Pro. Monarch of Gods and Demons, and all Spirits
But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds
Which Thou and I alone of living things
Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth,
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou
Requitest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,

And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,
With fear and self-contempt and barren hope.
Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn,
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
And moments aye divided by keen pangs
Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire.
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
From thine unenvied throne, O Mighty God!
Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.
I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
Of their moon-freezing chrystals, the bright chains
Eat with their burning cold into my bones.
Heaven's winged hound, polluting from thy lips
His beak in poison not his own, tears up
My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by,
The ghastly people of the realm of dream,

Mocking me: and the Earthquake-fiends are charged
To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds
When the rocks split and close again behind:
While from their loud abysses howling throng
The genii of the storm, urging the rage
Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.
And yet to me welcome is day and night,
Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn,
Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs
The leaden-coloured east; for then they lead
The wingless crawling hours, one among whom
—As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim—
Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood
From these pale feet, which then might trample thee
If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.
Disdain! Ah no! I pity thee. What ruin
Will hunt thee undefended thro' the wide Heaven!
How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,
Gape like a hell within! I speak in grief,
Not exultation, for I hate no more,
As then ere misery made me wise. The curse
Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains,
Whose many-voiced Echoes, through the mist
Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell!
Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,
Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept
Shuddering thro' India! Thou serenest Air,
Thro' which the Sun walks burning without beams!
And ye, swift Whirlwinds, who on poised wings
Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,
As thunder, louder than your own, made rock
The orbed world! If then my words had power,

Though I am changed so that aught evil wish
Is dead within; although no memory be
Of what is hate, let them not lose it now!
What was that curse? for ye all heard me speak.

First Voice: from the mountains.

Thrice three hundred thousand years
O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood:
Oft, as men convulsed with fears,
We trembled in our multitude.

Second Voice: from the springs.

Thunder-bolts had parched our water,
We had been stained with bitter blood,
And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of slaughter,
Thro' a city and a solitude.

Third Voice: from the air.

I had clothed, since Earth uprose,
Its wastes in colours not their own,
And oft had my serene repose
Been cloven by many a rending groan.

Fourth Voice: from the whirlwinds.

We had soared beneath these mountains
Unresting ages; nor had thunder,
Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,
Nor any power above or under,
Ever made us mute with wonder.

First Voice.

But never bowed our snowy crest
As at the voice of thine unrest.

Second Voice.

Never such a sound before
To the Indian waves we bore.
A pilot asleep on the howling sea
Leaped up from the deck in agony,
And heard, and cried, "Ah, woe is me!'
And died as mad as the wild waves be.

Third Voice.

By such dread words from Earth to Heaven
My still realm was never riven:
When its wound was closed, there stood
Darkness o'er the day like blood.

Fourth Voice.

And we shrank back: for dreams of ruin
To frozen caves our flight pursuing
Made us keep silence—thus—and thus—
Though silence is a hell to us.

The Earth. The tongueless Caverns of the craggy hills
Cried, 'Misery!' then; the hollow Heaven replied,
'Misery!' And the Ocean's purple waves,
Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds,
And the pale nations heard it, 'Misery!'

Pro. I hear a sound of voices: not the voice
Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons and thou
Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will

Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove,
Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist
Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye not me,
The Titan? He who made his agony
The barrier to your else all-conquering foe?
Oh, rock-embosomed lawns, and snow-fed streams,
Now seen athwart frore vapours, deep below,
Thro' whose o'ershadowing woods I wandered once
With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes;
Why scorns the spirit which informs ye, now
To commune with me? me alone, who check'd,
As one who checks a fiend-drawn charioteer,
The falsehood and the force of him who reigns
Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves
Fills your dim glens and liquid wildernesses:
Why answer ye not, still? Brethren!

The Earth. They dare not.

Pro. Who dares? for I would hear that curse again.
Ha, what an awful whisper rises up!
'Tis scarce like sound: it tingles thro' the frame
As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strikes.
Speak, Spirit! from thine inorganic voice
I only know that thou art moving near
And love. How cursed I him?

The Earth. How canst thou hear
Who knowest not the language of the dead?

Pro. Thou art a living spirit; speak as they.

The Earth. I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven's fell King
Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain
More torturing than the one whereon I roll.
Subtle thou art and good, and tho' the Gods

Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than God
Being wise and kind: earnestly hearken now.

Pro. Obscurely thro' my brain, like shadows dim,
Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel
Faint, like one mingled in entwining love:
Yet 'tis not pleasure.

The Earth. No, thou canst not hear:
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
Only to those who die.

Pro. And what art thou,
O melancholy Voice?

The Earth. I am the Earth,
Thy mother; she within whose stony veins,
To the last fibre of the loftiest tree
Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air,
Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,
When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud
Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy!
And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted
Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust,
And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread
Grew pale, until his thunder chained thee here.
Then, see those million worlds which burn and roll
Around us: their inhabitants beheld
My sphered light wane in wide Heaven; the sea
Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire
From earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow
Shook its portentous hair beneath Heaven's frown
Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains;
Blue thistles bloomed in cities; foodless toads
Within voluptuous chambers panting crawled:
When Plague had fallen on man and beast, and worm
And Famine; and black blight on herb and tree;

And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-grass,
Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds
Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry
With grief; and the thin air, my breath, was stained
With the contagion of a mother's hate
Breathed on her child's destroyer; aye, I heard
Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not,
Yet my innumerable seas and streams,
Mountains, and caves, and winds, and yon wide air,
And the inarticulate people of the dead,
Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate
In secret joy and hope those dreadful words,
But dare not speak them.

Pro. Venerable mother!
All else who live and suffer take from thee
Some comfort; flowers, and fruits, and happy sounds,
And love, though fleeting; these may not be mine.
But mine own words, I pray, deny me not.

The Earth. They shall be told. Ere Babylon was dust,
The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child,
Met his own image walking in the garden.
That apparition, sole of men, he saw.
For know there are two worlds of life and death:
One that which thou beholdest; but the other
Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
The shadows of all forms that think and live
Till death unite them and they part no more;
Dreams and the light imaginings of men,
And all that faith creates or love desires,
Terrible, strange, sublime, and beauteous shapes.
There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade,
'Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains; all the gods
Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds,

Vast sceptred phantoms; heroes, men, and beasts;
And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom;
And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne
Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter
The curse which all remember. Call at will
Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,
Hades, or Typhon, or what mightier Gods
From all-prolific Evil since thy ruin
Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons.
Ask, and they must reply: so the revenge
Of the Supreme may sweep thro' vacant shades,
As rainy wind thro' the abandoned gate
Of a fallen palace.

Pro. Mother, let not aught
Of that which may be evil pass again
My lips, or those of aught resembling me.
Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear!

Ione. My wings are folded o'er mine ears:
My wings are crossed o'er mine eyes:
Yet thro' their silver shade appears,
And thro' their lulling plumes arise,
A Shape, a throng of sounds;
May it be no ill to thee,
O thou of many wounds!
Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,
Ever thus we watch and wake.

Panthea. The sound is of whirlwind underground,
Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven;
The shape is awful like the sound,
Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.

A sceptre of pale gold
To stay steps proud, o'er the slow cloud
His veined hand doth hold.
Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,
Like one who does, not suffers, wrong.

Phantasm of Jupiter. Why have the secret powers of this strange world
Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither
On direst storms? What unaccustomed sounds
Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice
With which our palid race hold ghastly talk
In darkness? And, proud sufferer, who art thou?

Pro. Tremendous Image, as thou art must be
He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his foe,
The Titan. Speak the words which I would hear,
Although no thought inform thine empty voice.

The Earth. Listen! And tho' your echoes must be mute,
Grey mountains, and old woods, and haunted springs,
Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams,
Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak.

Phan. A spirst seizes me and speaks within:
It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud.

Pan. See, how he lifts his mighty looks! the Heaven
Darkens above.

Ione. He speaks! O shelter me!

Pro. I see the curse on gestures proud and cold,
And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,
And such despair as mocks itself with smiles,
Written as on a scroll: yet speak: Oh, speak!

Phantasm. Fiend, I defy thee! With a calm fixed mind,
All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do;
Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Human-kind,
One only being shalt thou not subdue.
Rain then thy plagues upon me here,
Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear;
And let alternate frost and fire
Eat into me, and be thine ire
Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms
Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

Aye, do thy worst. Thou art omnipotent.
O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,
And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent
To blast mankind, from yon ethereal tower.
Let thy malignant spirit move
In darkness over those I love:
On me and mine I imprecate
The utmost torture of thy hate;
And thus devote to sleepless agony
This undeclining head while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord: O thou
Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,
To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow
In fear and worship: all-prevailing foe!
I curse thee! Let a sufferer's curse
Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse;
'Till thine Infinity shall be
A robe of envenomed agony,
And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain,
To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse,
Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good;
Both infinite as is the universe,
And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude.
An awful image of calm power
Though now thou sittest, let the hour
Come when thou must appear to be
That which thou art internally,
And after many a false and fruitless crime
Scorn track thy lagging fall thro' boundless space and time.

Pro. Were these my words, O Parent?
The Earth. They were thine.
Pro. It doth repent me: words are quick and vain:
Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.
I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

The Earth. Misery, O misery to me,
That Jove at length should vanquish thee.
Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,
The Earth's rent heart shall answer ye.
Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead,
Your refuge, your defence, lies fallen and vanquished.

First Echo. Lies fallen and vanquished!

Second Echo. Fallen and vanquished!

Ione. Fear not: 'tis but some passing spasm,
The Titan is unvanquished still,
But see, where, thro' the azure chasm
Of yon forked and snowy hill,

Trampling the slant winds on high
With golden-sandalled feet, that glow
Under plumes of purple dye,
Like rose-ensanguined ivory,
A Shape comes now,
Stretching on high from his right hand
A serpent-cinctured wand.

Pan. 'Tis Jove's world-wandering herald, Mercury.

Ione. And who are those with hydra tresses
And iron wings that climb the wind,
Whom the frowning God represses
Like vapours steaming up behind,
Clanging loud, an endless crowd—

Panthea. These are Jove's tempest-walking hounds,
Whom he gluts with groans and blood,
When charioted on sulphurous cloud
He bursts Heaven's bounds.

Ione. Are they now led from the thin dead
On new pangs to be fed?

Pan. The Titan looks, as ever, firm, not proud.
First Fury. Ha! I scent life!
Second Fury. Let me but look into his eyes!
Third Fury. The hope of torturing him smells liks a heap
Of corpses to a death-bird after battle.
First Fury. Darest thou delay, O Herald? Take cheer, Hounds
Of Hell: what if the Son of Maia soon

Should make us food and sport—who can please long
The Omnipotent?

Mer. Back to your towers of iron,
And gnash beside the streams of fire and wail
Your foodless teeth. Geryon, arise! and Gorgon,
Chimæra, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends
Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's poisoned wine,
Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate:
These shall perform your task.

First Fury. O mercy! mercy!
We die with our desire: drive us not back!

Mer. Crouch then in silence.
Awful Sufferer,
To thee unwilling, most unwillingly
I come, by the great Father's will driven down,
To execute a doom of new revenge.
Alas! I pity thee, and hate myself
That I can do no more: aye from thy sight
Returning, for a season, heaven seems hell,
So thy worn form pursues me night and day,
Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good,
But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife
Against the Omnipotent; as yon clear lamps
That measure and divide the weary years
From which there is no refuge, long have taught
And long must teach. Even now the Torturer arms
With the strange might of unimagined pains
The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,
And my commission is to lead them here,
Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends
People the abyss, and leave them to their task.
Be it not so! There is a secret known

To thee, and to none else of living things,
Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,
The fear of which perplexes the Supreme:
Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne
In intercession; bend thy soul in prayer,
And, like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane,
Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart:
For benefits and meek submission tame
The fiercest and the mightiest.

Pro. Evil minds
Change good to their own nature. I gave all
He has; and in return he chains me here
Years, ages, night, and day: whether the Sun
Split my parched skin, or in the moony night
The chrystal-winged snow cling round my hair:
Whilst my beloved race is trampled down
By his thought-executing ministers.
Such is the tyrants' recompense: 'tis just:
He who is evil can receive no good;
And for a world bestowed, or a friend lost,
He can feel hate, fear, shame; not gratitude:
He but requites me for his own misdeed.
Kindness to such is keen reproach, which breaks
With bitter stings the light sleep of Revenge.
Submission, thou dost know I cannot try:
For what submission but that fatal word,
The death-seal of mankind's captivity,
Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword,
Which trembles o'er his crown, would he accept,
Or could I yield? which yet I will not yield.
Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned
In brief Omnipotence: secure are they:
For Justice, when triumphant, will weep down

Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,
Too much avenged by those who err. I wait,
Enduring thus, the retributive hour,
Which since we spake is even nearer now.
But hark, the hell-hounds clamour: fear delay:
Behold! Heaven lowers under thy Father's frown.

Mer. Oh, that we might be spared: I to inflict
And thou to suffer! Once more answer me:
Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power?

Pro. I know but this, that it must come.

Mer. Alas!
Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain?

Pro. They last while Jove must reign: nor more, nor less,
Do I desire or fear.

Mer. Yet pause, and plunge
Into Eternity, where recorded time,
Even all that we imagine, age on age,
Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind
Flags wearily in its unending flight,
Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless;
Perchance it has not numbered the slow years
Which thou might'st spend in torture, unreprieved.

Pro. Perchance no thought can count them, yet they pass.

Mer. If thou might'st dwell among the Gods the while
Lapped in voluptuous joy,

Pro. I would not quit
This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

Mer. Alas! I wonder at yet pity thee.

Pro. Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,
As light in the sun, throned: how vain is talk!
Call up the fiends.

Ione. O sister, look! White fire

Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-loaded cedar;
How fearfully God's thunder howls behind!

Mer. I must obey his words and thine: alas!
Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart!

Pan. See where the child of Heaven, with winged feet,
Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn.

Ione. Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine eyes
Least thou behold and die: they come: they come
Blackening the birth of day with countless wings,
And hollow underneath, like death.

First Fury. Prometheus!

Second Fury. Immortal Titan!

Third Fury. Champion of Heaven's slaves!

Pro. He whom some dreadful voice invokes is here,
Prometheus, the chained Titan. Horrible forms,
What and who are ye? Never yet there came
Phantasms so foul thro' monster-teeming Hell
From the all-miscreative brain of Jove;
Whilst I behold such execrable shapes,
Methinks I grow like what I contemplate,
And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.

First Fury. We are the ministers of pain, and fear,
And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate,
And clinging crime; and, as lean dogs pursue
Thro' wood and lake some struck and sobbing fawn,
We track all things that weep, and bleed, and live,
When the great King betrays them to our will.

Pro. Oh! many fearful natures in one name,
I know ye; and these lakes and echoes know
The darkness and the clangour of your wings.
But why more hideous than your loathed selves
Gather ye up in legions from the deep?

Second Fury. We knew not that: Sisters, rejoice, rejoice!

Pro. Can aught exult in its deformity?

Second Fury. The beauty of delight makes lovers glad,
Gazing on one another: so are we.
As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels
To gather for her festal crown of flowers
The aerial crimson falls, flushing her cheek,
So from our victim's destined agony
The shade which is our form invests us round
Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

Pro. I laugh your power, and his who sent you here,
To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain.

First Fury. Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone from bone,
And nerve from nerve, working like fire within?

Pro. Pain is my element, as hate is thine;
Ye rend me now: I care not.

Second Fury. Dost imagine
We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes?

Pro. I weigh not what ye do, but what ye suffer,
Being evil. Cruel was the power which called
You, or aught else so wretched, into light.

Third Fury. Thou think'st we will live thro' thee, one by one,
Like animal life, and tho' we can obscure not
The soul which burns within, that we will dwell
Beside it, like a vain loud multitude
Vexing the self-content of wisest men;
That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain,
And foul desire round thine astonished heart,
And blood within thy labyrinthine veins,
Crawling like agony.

Pro. Why, ye are thus now;
Yet am I king over myself, and rule
The torturing and conflicting throngs within,
As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous.

Chorus of Furies.

From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the earth,
Where the night has its grave and the morning its birth,
Come, come, come!
Oh, ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth,
When cities sink howling in ruin; and ye
Who with wingless foosteps trample the sea,
And, close upon Shipwreckand Famine's track,
Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck;
Come, come, come!
Leave the bed, low, cold, and red,
Strewed beneath a nation dead;
Leave the hatred, as in ashes
Fire is left for future burning:
It will burst in bloodier flashes
When ye stir it, soon returning:
Leave the self-contempt implanted
In young spirits, sense-enchanted,
Misery's yet unkindled fuel:
Leave Hell's secrets half unchanted,
To the maniac dreamer; cruel
More than ye can be with hate
Is he with fear.
Come, come, come!
We are steaming up from Hell's wide gate,
And we burthen the blasts of the atmosphere,
But vainly we toil till ye come here.

Ione. Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.

Pan. These solid mountains quiver with the sound
Even as the tremulous air: their shadows make
The space within my plumes more black than night.

First Fury. Your call was as a winged car
Driven on whirlwinds fast and far;
It rapt us from red gulphs of war.

Second Fury. From wide cities, famine-wasted;

Third Fury. Groans half heard, and blood untasted;

Fourth Fury. Kingly conclaves stern and cold,
Where blood with gold is bought and sold;

Fifth Fury. From the furnace, white and hot,
In which—

A Fury. Speak not: whisper not:
I know all that ye would tell,
But to speak might break the spell
Which must bend the Invincible,
The stern of thought;
He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

Fury. Tear the veil!

Another Fury. It is torn.

Chorus. The pale stars of the morn
Shine on a misery dire to be borne.
Dost thou faint, mighty Titan? We laugh thee to scorn.

Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst for
man?
Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran
Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever,
Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for ever.

One came forth of gentle worth
Smiling on the sanguine earth;
His words outlived him, like swift poison
Withering up truth, peace, and pity.
Look! where round the wide horizon
Many a million-peopled city
Vomits smoke in the bright air.
Mark that outcry of despair!
'Tis his mild and gentle ghost
Wailing for the faith he kindled:
Look again, the flames almost
To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled:
The survivors round the embers
Gather in dread.
Joy, joy, joy!
Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers,
And the future is dark, and the present is spread
Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

Semichorus I. Drops of bloody agony flow
From his white and quivering brow.
Grant a little respite now:
See a disenchanted nation
Springs like day from desolation;
To truth its state is dedicate,
And Freedom leads it forth, her mate;

A legioned band of linked brothers
Whom Love calls children—

Semichorus II. 'Tis another's:
See how kindred murder kin:
'Tis the vintage-time for death and sin:
Blood, like new wine, bubbles within,
'Till Despair smothers
The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.
[*All the* FURIES *vanish, except one.*

Ione. Hark, sister! what a low yet dreadful groan
Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart
Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep,
And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.
Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him?

Pan. Alas! I looked forth twice, but will no more.

Ione. What didst thou see?

Pan. A woful sight: a youth
With patient looks nailed to a crucifix.

Ione. What next?

Pan. The heaven around, the earth below,
Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,
All horrible, and wrought by human hands,
And some appeared the work of human hearts,
For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles:
And other sights too foul to speak and live
Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear
By looking forth: those groans are grief enough.

Fury. Behold an emblem: those who do endure
Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but heap
Thousand-fold torment on themselves and him.

Pro. Remit the anguish of that lighted stare;
Close those wan lips; let that thorn-wounded brow
Stream not with blood; it mingles with thy tears!
Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death,
So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,
So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.
O horrible! Thy name I will not speak,
It hath become a curse. I see, I see
The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just,
Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,
Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home,
An early-chosen late-lamented home;
As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind;
Some linked to corpses in unwholesome cells:
Some—Hear I not the multitude laugh loud?—
Impaled in lingering fire: and mighty realms
Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,
Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood
By the red light of their own burning homes.

Fury. Blood thou canst see, and fire; and canst hear groans;
Worse things, unheard, unseen, remain behind.

Pro. Worse?

Fury. In each human heart terror survives
The ruin it has gorged: the loftiest fear
All that they would disdain to think were true:
Hypocrisy and custom make their minds
The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.
They dare not devise good for man's estate,
And yet they know not that they do not dare.
The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
The powerful goodness want, worse need for them.
The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;

And all best things are thus confused to ill.
Many are strong and rich, and would be just.
But live among their suffering fellow-men
As if none felt: they know not what they do.

Pro. Thy words are like a cloud of winged snakes;
And yet I pity those they torture not.

Fury. Thou pitiest them? I speak no more!

[*Vanishes.*

Pro. Ah woe!
Ah woe! Alas! pain, pain ever, for ever!
I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear
Thy works within my woe-illumed mind,
Thou subtle tyrant! Peace is in the grave.
The grave hides all things beautiful and good:
I am a God, and cannot find it there,
Nor would I seek it: for, though dread revenge,
This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.
The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul
With new endurance, till the hour arrives
When they shall be no types of things which are.

Pan. Alas! what sawest thou?

Pro. There are two woes;
To speak, and to behold; thou spare me one.
Names are there, Nature's sacred watch-words, they
Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry;
The nations thronged around, and cried aloud,
As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love!
Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven
Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear:
Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.
This was the shadow of the truth I saw.

The Earth. I felt thy torture, son, with such mixed joy

As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state
I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits,
Whose homes are the dim eaves of human thought,
And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind,
Its world-surrounding ether! they behold
Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,
The future: may they speak comfort to thee!

Pan. Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather,
Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,
Thronging in the blue air!

Ione. And see! more come,
Like fountain-vapours when the winds are dumb,
That climb up the ravine in scattered lines.
And, hark! is it the music of the pines?
Is it the lake? Is it the waterfall?

Pan. 'Tis something sadder, sweeter far than all.

Chorus of Spirits. From unremembered ages we
Gentle guides and guardians be
Of heaven-oppressed mortality;
And we breathe, and sicken not,
The atmosphere of human thought:
Be it dim, and dank, and grey,
Like a storm-extinguished day,
Travelled o'er by dying gleams;
Be it bright as all between
Cloudless skies and windless streams,
Silent, liquid, and serene;
As the birds within the wind,
As the fish within the wave,
As the thoughts of man's own mind
Float thro' all above the grave;
We make these our liquid lair,

Voyaging cloudlike and unpent
Thro' the boundless element:
Thence we bear the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee!

Ione. More yet come, one by one: the air around them
Looks radiant as the air around a star.

First Spirit. On a battle-trumpet's blast
I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,
'Mid the darkness upward cast.
From the dust of creeds outworn,
From the tyrant's banner torn,
Gathering 'round me, onward borne,
There was mingled many a cry—
Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory!
Till they faded thro' the sky;
And one sound, above, around,
One sound beneath, around, above,
Was moving; 'twas the soul of love;
'Twas the hope, the prophecy,
Which begins and ends in thee.

Second Spirit. A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,
Which rocked beneath, immoveably;
And the triumphant storm did flee,
Like a conqueror, swift and proud,
Between with many a captive cloud
A shapeless, dark, and rapid, crowd,
Each by lightning riven in half:
I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh:
Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff

And spread beneath a hell of death
O'er the white waters. I alit
On a great ship lightning-split,
And speeded hither on the sigh
Of one who gave an enemy
His plank, then plunged aside to die.

Third Spirit. I sate beside a sage's bed,
And the lamp was burning red
Near the book where he had fed,
When a Dream with plumes of flame
To his pillow hovering came.
And I knew it was the same
Which had kindled long ago
Pity, eloquence, and woe;
And the world awhile below
Wore the shade its lustre made.
It has born me here as fleet
As Desire's lightning feet:
I must ride it back ere morrow,
Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

Fourth Spirit. On a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the aerial kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illume
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,

Nor heed nor see what things they be;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality!
One of these awakened me,
And I sped to succour thee.

Ione. Behold'st thou not two shapes from the east and west
Come, as two doves to one beloved nest,
Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air
On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere?
And, hark! their sweet sad voices! 'tis despair
Mingled with love, and then dissolved in sound.

Panthea. Canst thou speak, sister? all my words are drowned.

Ione. Their beauty gives me voice. See how they float
On their sustaining wings of skiey grain,
Orange and azure deepening into gold:
Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire.

Chorus of Spirits. Hast thou beheld the form of Love?

Fifth Spirit. As over wide dominions
I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's wildernesses,
That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-braided pinions,
Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial tresses:
His footsteps paved the world with light; but as I pass'd 'twas fading,

And hollow Ruin yawned behind: great sages bound in madness,
And headless patriots, and pale youths who perished, unupbraiding,
Gleamed in the night. I wandered o'er, till thou, O King of sadness,
Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to recollected gladness.

Sixth Spirit. Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing:
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,
But treads with silent footstep, and fans with silent wing
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and gentlest bear;
Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes above
And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy feet,
Dream visions of aerial joy, and call the monster Love,
And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom now we greet.

Chorus. Though Ruin now Love's shadow be,
Following him, destroyingly,
On Death's white and winged steed,
Which the fleetest cannot flee,
Trampling down both flower and weed,
Man and beast, and foul and fair,
Like a tempest thro' the air,
Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
Woundless though in heart or limb.

Pro. Spirits! how know ye this shall be?

Chorus. In the atmosphere we breathe,
As buds grow red when the snow-storms flee,
From spring gathering up beneath,
Whose mild winds shake the elder brake,
And the wandering herdsmen know
That the white-thorn soon will blow:
Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,
When they struggle to increase,
Are to us as soft winds be
To shepherd boys, the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee.

Ione. Where are the Spirits fled?

Panthea. Only a sense
Remains of them, like the omnipotence
Of music, when the inspired voice and lute
Languish, ere yet the responses are mute,
Which thro' the deep and labyrinthine soul,
Like echoes thro' long caverns, wind and roll.

Pro. How fair these air-born shapes! and yet I feel
Most vain all hope but love; and thou art far,
Asia! who, when my being overflowed,
Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine
Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.
All things are still: alas! how heavily
This quiet morning weighs upon my heart;
Tho' I should dream I could even sleep with grief
If slumber were denied not. I would fain
Be what it is my destiny to be,
The saviour and the strength of suffering man,

Or sink into the original gulph of things:
There is no agony, and no solace left;
Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more.

Pan. Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee
The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when
The shadow of thy spirit falls on her?

Pro. I said all hope was vain but love: thou lovest.

Pan. Deeply in truth; but the eastern star looks white,
And Asia waits in that far Indian vale
The scene of her sad exile; rugged once
And desolate and frozen, like this ravine;
But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow
Among the woods and waters, from the ether
Of her transforming presence, which would fade
If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell!

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Morning. A lovely Vale in the Indian Caucasus. ASIA *alone.*

Asia. From all the blasts of heaven thou hast descended
Yes, like a spirit, like a thought, which makes
Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes,
And beating haunts the desolated heart,
Which should have learnt repose: thou hast descended
Cradled in tempests; thou dost wake. O Spring!
O child of many winds! As suddenly

Thou comest as the memory of a dream,
Which now is sad because it hath been sweet;
Like genius, or like joy which riseth up
As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds
The desert of our life.
This is the season, this the day, the hour;
At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine,
Too long desired, too long delaying, come!
How like death-worms the wingless moments crawl!
The point of one white star is quivering still
Deep in the orange light of widening morn
Beyond the purple mountains: thro' a chasm
Of wind-divided mist the darker lake
Reflects it: now it wanes: it gleams again
As the waves fade, and as the burning threads
Of woven cloud unravel in pale air:
'Tis lost! and thro' yon peaks of cloudlike snow
The roseate sun-light quivers: hear I not
The Æolian music of her sea-green plumes
Winnowing the crimson dawn?

PANTHEA *enters.*

I feel, I see,
Those eyes which burn thro' smiles that fade in tears,
Like stars half-quenched in mists of silver dew.
Beloved and most beautiful, who wearest
The shadow of that soul by which I live,
How late thou art! the sphered sun had climbed
The sea; my heart was sick with hope, before
The printless air felt thy belated plumes.

Pan. Pardon, great Sister! but my wings were faint
With the delight of a remembered dream,
As are the noon-tide plumes of summer winds

Satiate with sweet flowers. I was wont to sleep
Peacefully, and awake refreshed and calm
Before the sacred Titan's fall, and thy
Unhappy love, had made, thro' use and pity,
Both love and woe familiar to my heart
As they had grown to thine: erewhile I slept,
Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean,
Within dim bowers of green and purple moss,
Our young Ione's soft and milky arms
Locked then, as now, behind my dark moist hair,
While my shut eyes and cheek were pressed within
The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom:
But not as now, since I am made the wind
Which fails beneath the music that I bear
Of thy most wordless converse; since dissolved
Into the sense with which love talks, my rest
Was troubled and yet sweet; my waking hours
Too full of care and pain.

Asia. Lift up thine eyes,
And let me read thy dream.

Pan. As I have said
With our sea-sister at his feet I slept.
The mountain mists, condensing at our voice
Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes,
From the keen ice shielding our linked sleep.
Then two dreams came. One, I remember not.
But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs
Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night
Grew radiant with the glory of that form
Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell
Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,
Faint with intoxication of keen joy:
"Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world

"With loveliness—more fair than aught but her,
"Whose shadow thou art—lift thine eyes on me."
I lifted them: the overpowering light
Of that immortal shape was shadowed o'er
By love; which, from his soft and flowing limbs,
And passion-parted lips, and keen faint eyes,
Steamed forth like vaporous fire; an atmosphere
Which wrapt me in its all-dissolving power,
As the warm ether of the morning sun
Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew.
I was not, heard not, moved not, only felt
His presence flow and mingle thro' my blood
Till it became his life, and his grew mine,
And I was thus absorb'd, until it past,
And like the vapours when the sun sinks down,
Gathering again in drops upon the pines,
And tremulous as they, in the deep night
My being was condensed; and as the rays
Of thought were slowly gathered, I could hear
His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died
Like footsteps of weak melody: thy name
Among the many sounds alone I heard
Of what might be articulate; tho' still
I listened through the night when sound was none.
Ione wakened then, and said to me:
"Canst thou divine what troubles me to night?
"I always knew what I desired before,
"Nor ever found delight to wish in vain.
"But now I cannot tell thee what I seek;
"I know not; something sweet, since it is sweet
"Even to desire; it is thy sport, false sister;
"Thou hast discovered some enchantment old,
"Whose spells have stolen my spirit as I slept

"And mingled it with thine: for when just now
"We kissed, I felt within thy parted lips
"The sweet air that sustained me, and the warmth
"Of the life-blood, for loss of which I faint,
"Quivered between our intertwining arms."
I answered not, for the Eastern star grew pale,
But fled to thee.

Asia. Thou speakest, but thy words
Are as the air: I feel them not. Oh, lift
Thine eyes, that I may read his written soul!

Pan. I lift them tho' they droop beneath the load
Of that they would express: what canst thou see
But thine own fairest shadow imaged there?

Asia. Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless, heaven
Contracted to two circles underneath
Their long fine lashes; dark, far, measureless,
Orb within orb, and line thro' line inwoven.

Pan. Why lookest thou as if a spirit past?

Asia. There is a change: beyond their inmost depth
I see a shade, a shape: 'tis He, arrayed
In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread
Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded morn.
Prometheus, it is thine! depart not yet!
Say not those smiles that we shall meet again
Within that bright pavilion which their beams
Shall build on the waste world? The dream is told.
What shape is that between us? Its rude hair
Roughens the wind that lifts it; its regard
Is wild and quick, yet 'tis a thing of air,
For thro' its grey robe gleams the golden dew
Whose stars the noon has quench'd not.

Dream. Follow! Follow!

Pan. It is mine other dream.

Asia. It disappears.

Pan. It passes now into my mind. Methought
As we sate here, the flower-infolding buds
Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond-tree,
When swift from the white Scythian wilderness
A wind swept forth wrinkling the Earth with frost:
I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down;
But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells
Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief,
OH, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

Asia. As you speak, your words
Fill, pause by pause, my own forgotten sleep
With shapes. Methought among the lawns together
We wandered, underneath the young grey dawn,
And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains
Shepherded by the slow unwilling wind;
And the white dew on the new-bladed grass,
Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently;
And there was more which I remember not:
But on the shadows of the morning clouds,
Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written
FOLLOW, OH, FOLLOW! As they vanished by,
And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had fallen,
The like was stamped, as with a withering fire
A wind arose among the pines; it shook
The clinging music from their boughs, and then
Low, sweet, faint, sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,
Were heard: OH, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, ME!
And then I said: "Panthea, look on me."

But in the depth of those beloved eyes
Still I saw FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

Echo. Follow, follow!

Pan. The crags, this clear spring morning, mock our voices
As they were spirit-tongued.
Asia. It is some being
Around the crags. What fine clear sounds! O, list!

ECHOES, *unseen.* Echoes we: listen!
We cannot stay:
As dew-stars glisten
Then fade away—
Child of Ocean!

Asia. Hark! Spirits speak. The liquid responses
Of their aerial tongues yet sound.
Pan. I hear.

Echoes. Oh, follow, follow,
As our voice recedeth
Thro' the caverns hollow,
Where the forest spreadeth;
(*More distant*) Oh, follow, follow!
Thro' the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
Where the wild bee never flew,
Thro' the noon-tide darkness deep,
By the odour-breathing sleep

Of faint night flowers, and the waves
At the fountain-lighted caves,
While our music, wild and sweet,
Mocks thy gently falling feet,
Child of Ocean!

Asia. Shall we pursue the sound? It grows more faint
And distant.

Pan. List! the strain floats nearer now.

Echoes. In the world unknown
Sleeps a voice unspoken;
By that step alone
Can its rest be broken,
Child of Ocean!

Asia. How the notes sink upon the ebbing wind!

Echoes. Oh, follow, follow!
Thro' the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
By the woodland noon-tide dew;
By the forests, lakes, and fountains,
Thro' the many-folded mountains;
To the rents, and gulphs, and chasms,
Where the Earth reposed from spasms,
On the day when He and thou
Parted, to commingle now,
Child of Ocean!

Asia. Come, sweet Panthea, link thy hand in mine,
And follow, ere the voices fade away.

SCENE II.

A Forest, intermingled with rocks and caverns. ASIA *and* PANTHEA *pass into it. Two young Fauns are sitting on a Rock, listening.*

Semichorus I. of Spirits.

The path thro' which that lonely twain
Have past, by cedar, pine, and yew,
And each dark tree that ever grew,
Is curtained out from Heaven's wide blue;
Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,
Can pierce its interwoven bowers,
Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew,
Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,
Between the trunks of the hoar trees
Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers
Of the green laurel, blown anew;
And bends, and then fades silently,
One frail and fair anemone:
Or when some star, of many a one
That climbs and wanders thro' steep night,
Has found the cleft thro' which alone
Beams fall from high those depths upon
Ere it is borne away, away,
By the swift Heavens that cannot stay,
It scatters drops of golden light,
Like lines of rain that ne'er unite:
And the gloom divine is all around,
And underneath is the mossy ground.

Semichorus II. There the voluptuous nightingales
Are awake thro' all the broad noon-day,
When one with bliss or sadness fails,

And thro' the windless ivy-boughs,
Sick with sweet love, droops dying away
On its mate's music-panting bosom;
Another from the swinging blossom,
Watching to catch the languid close
Of the last strain, then lifts on high
The wings of the weak melody,
'Till some new strain of feeling bear
The song, and all the woods are mute;
When there is heard thro' the dim air
The rush of wings, and rising there
Like many a lake-surrounding flute,
Sounds overflow the listener's brain
So sweet, that joy is almost pain.

Semichorus I. There those enchanted eddies play
Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,
By Demogorgon's mighty law,
With melting rapture, or sweet awe,
All spirits on that secret way;
As inland boats are driven to Ocean
Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw:
And first there comes a gentle sound
To those in talk or slumber bound,
And wakes the destined soft emotion,
Attracts, impels them: those who saw
Say from the breathing earth behind
There steams a plume-uplifting wind
Which drives them on their path, while they
Believe their own swift wings and feet
The sweet desires within obey:
And so they float upon their way,
Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,
The storm of sound is driven along,

Sucked up and hurrying as they fleet
Behind, its gathering billows meet,
And to the fatal mountain bear
Like clouds amid the yielding air.

First Faun. Canst thou imagine where those spirits live
Which make such delicate music in the woods?
We haunt within the least frequented caves
And closest coverts, and we know these wilds,
Yet never meet them, tho' we hear them oft:
Where may they hide themselves?

Second Faun. 'Tis hard to tell:
I have heard those more skilled in spirits say,
The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun
Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave
The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,
Are the pavilions where such dwell and float
Under the green and golden atmosphere
Which noon-tide kindles thro' the woven leaves;
And, when these burst, and the thin fiery air,
The which they breathed within those lucent domes,
Ascends to flow like meteors thro' the night,
They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed,
And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire
Under the waters of the earth again.

First Faun. If such live thus, have others other lives,
Under pink blossoms or within the bells
Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep,
Or on their dying odours, when they die,
Or on the sunlight of the sphered dew?

Second Faun. Aye, many more which we may well divine.
But, should we stay to speak, noontide would come,
And thwart Silenus finds his goats undrawn,

And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs
Of fate, and chance, and God, and Chaos old,
And Love, and the chained Titan's woful dooms,
And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth
One brotherhood: delightful strains which cheer
Our solitary twilights, and which charm
To silence the unenvying nightingales.

SCENE III.

A Pinnacle of Rock among Mountains. ASIA *and* PANTHEA.

Pan. Hither the sound has borne us—to the realm
Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal,
Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm,
Whence the oracular vapour is hurled up
Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,
And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,
That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain
To deep intoxication; and uplift,
Like Mænads who cry loud, Evoe! Evoe!
The voice which is contagion to the world.

Asia. Fit throne for such a Power! Magnificent!
How glorious art thou, Earth! And if thou be
The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,
Though evil stain its work, and it should be,
Like its creation, weak yet beautiful,
I could fall down and worship that and thee.
Even now my heart adoreth: Wonderful!
Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain:
Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,
As a lake, paving in the morning sky,
With azure waves which burst in silver light,

Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on
Under the curdling winds, and islanding
The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,
Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests,
Dim twilight-lawns, and stream-illumined caves,
And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist;
And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains
From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling
The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray,
From some Atlantic islet scattered up,
Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops.
The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl
Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines
Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast,
Awful as silence. Hark! the rushing snow!
The sun-awakened avalanche! whose mass,
Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there
Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds
As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth
Is loosened, and the nations echo round,
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

Pan. Look how the gusty sea of mist is breaking
In crimson foam, even at our feet! It rises
As Ocean at the enchantment of the moon
Round foodless men wrecked on some oozy isle.

Asia. The fragments of the cloud are scattered up;
The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair;
Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes; my brain
Grows dizzy. I see thin shapes within the mist.

Pan. A countenance with beckoning smiles: there burns
An azure fire within its golden locks!
Another and another: hark! they speak!

Song of Spirits. To the deep, to the deep,
Down, down!
Through the shade of sleep,
Through the cloudy strife
Of Death and of Life;
Through the veil and the bar
Of things which seem and are
Even to the steps of the remotest throne,
Down, down!

While the sound whirls around,
Down, down!
As the fawn draws the hound,
As the lightning the vapour,
As a weak moth the taper;
Death, despair; love, sorrow;
Time both; to day, to morrow;
As steel obeys the spirit of the stone,
Down, down.

Through the grey void abysm,
Down, down!
Where the air is no prism,
And the moon and stars are not,
And the cavern-crags wear not
The radiance of Heaven,
Nor the gloom to Earth given,
Where there is one pervading, one alone,
Down, down!

In the depth of the deep,
Down, down!
Like veiled lightning asleep,

Like the spark nursed in embers,
The last look Love remembers,
Like a diamond which shines
On the dark wealth of mines,
A spell is treasur'd but for thee alone.
Down, down!

We have bound thee, we guide thee;
Down, down!
With the bright form beside thee,
Resist not the weakness,
Such strength is in meekness
That the Eternal, the Immortal,
Must unloose through life's portal
The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his throne
By that alone.

SCENE IV.

The Cave of DEMOGORGON. ASIA *and* PANTHEA.

Pan. What veiled form sits on that ebon throne?
Asia. The veil has fallen.
Pan. I see a mighty darkness
Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom
Dart round, as light from the meridian sun,
Ungazed upon and shapeless; neither limb,
Nor form, nor outline; yet we feel it is
A living Spirit
Dem. Ask what thou wouldst know.
Asia. What canst thou tell?
Dem. All things thou dar'st demand.
Asia. Who made the living world?
Dem. God.

Asia. Who made all
That it contains? thought, passion, reason, will,
Imagination?

Dem. God: Almighty God.

Asia. Who made that sense which, when the winds of spring
In rarest visitation, or the voice
Of one beloved heard in youth alone,
Fills the faint eyes with falling tears which dim
The radiant looks of unbewailing flowers,
And leaves this peopled earth a solitude
When it returns no more?

Dem. Merciful God.

Asia. And who made terror, madness, crime, remorse,
Which, from the links of the great chain of things
To every thought within the mind of man,
Sway and drag heavily, and each one reels
Under the load towards the pit of death;
Abandoned hope, and love that turns to hate;
And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood;
Pain, whose unheeded and familiar speech
Is howling, and keen shrieks, day after day;
And Hell, or the sharp fear of Hell?

Dem. He reigns.

Asia. Utter his name: a world pining in pain
Asks but his name: curses shall drag him down.

Dem. He reigns.

Asia. I feel, I know it: who?

Dem. He reigns.

Asia. Who reigns? There was the Heaven and Earth at first,
And Light and Love; then Saturn, from whose throne
Time fell, an envious shadow: such the state
Of the earth's primal spirits beneath his sway,
As the calm joy of flowers and living leave

Before the wind or sun has withered them
And semivital worms; but he refused
The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,
The skill which wields the elements, the thought
Which pierces this dim universe like light,
Self-empire, and the majesty of love,
For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometheus
Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,
And with this law alone, 'Let man be free,'
Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.
To know nor faith, nor love, nor law; to be
Omnipotent but friendless, is to reign;
And Jove now reigned; for on the race of man
First famine, and then toil, and then disease,
Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before,
Fell; and the unseasonable seasons drove,
With alternating shafts of frost and fire,
Their shelterless pale tribes to mountain caves:
And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent,
And mad disquietudes, and shadows idle
Of unreal good, which levied mutual war,
So ruining the lair wherein they raged.
Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes
Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers,
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,
That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings
The shape of Death; and Love he sent to bind
The disunited tendrils of that vine
Which bears the wine of life, the human heart;
And he tamed fire, which, like some beast of prey,
Most terrible, but lovely, played beneath
The frown of man; and tortured to his will
Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,

And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms
Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.
He gave man speech, and speech created thought,
Which is the measure of the universe;
And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven,
Which shook, but fell not: and the harmonious mind
Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song;
And music lifted up the listening spirit
Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,
Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound;
And human hands first mimicked and then mocked,
With moulded limbs more lovely than its own,
The human form, till marble grew divine;
And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see
Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.
We told the hidden power of herbs and springs,
And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like sleep.
He taught the implicated orbits woven
Of the wide-wandering stars; and how the sun
Changes his lair, and by what secret spell
The pale moon is transformed, when her broad eye
Gazes not on the interlunar sea:
He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs,
The tempest-winged chariots of the Ocean,
And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then
Were built, and through their snow-like columns flowed
The warm winds, and the azure æther shone,
And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen.
Such, the alleviations of his state,
Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs
Withering in destined pain: but who reigns down
Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while
Man looks on his creation like a God
And sees that it is glorious, drives him on

The wreck of his own will, the scorn of earth,
The outcast, the abandoned, the alone?
Not Jove: while yet his frown shook heaven, aye when
His adversary from adamantine chains
Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare
Who is his master? Is he too a slave?

Dem. All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil:
Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no.

Asia. Whom called'st thou God?

Dem. I spoke but as ye speak,
For Jove is the supreme of living things.

Asia. Who is the master of the slave?

Dem. If the abysm
Could vomit forth its secrets. But a voice
Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;
For what would it avail to bid thee gaze
On the revolving world? What to bid speak
Fate, Time, Occasion Chance, and Change? To these
All things are subject but eternal Love.

Asia. So much I asked before, and my heart gave
The response thou hast given; and of such truths
Each to itself must be the oracle.
One more demand; and do thou answer me
As my own soul would answer, did it know
That which I ask. Prometheus shall arise
Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world:
When shall the destined hour arrive?

Dem. Behold!

Asia. The rocks are cloven, and through the purple night
I see cars drawn by rainbow-winged steeds
Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands
A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.
Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,

And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars:
Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink
With eager lips the wind of their own speed,
As if the thing they loved fled on before,
And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks
Stream like a comet's flashing hair: they all
Sweep onward.

Dem. These are the immortal Hours,
Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.

Asia. A spirit with a dreadful countenance
Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulph.
Unlike thy brethren, ghastly charioteer,
Who art thou? Whither wouldst thou bear me? Speak!

Spirit. I am the shadow of a destiny
More dread than is my aspect: ere yon planet
Has set, the darkness which ascends with me
Shall wrap in lasting night heaven's kingless throne.

Asia. What meanest thou?

Pan. That terrible shadow floats
Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke
Of earthquake-ruined cities o'er the sea.
Lo! it ascends the car; the coursers fly
Terrified: watch its path among the stars,
Blackening the night!

Asia. Thus I am answered: strange!

Pan. See, near the verge, another chariot stays;
An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire,
Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim
Of delicate strange tracery; the young spirit
That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope.
How its soft smiles attract the soul! as light
Lures winged insects thro' the lampless air.

Spirit. My coursers are fed with the lightning,
They drink of the whirlwind's stream,
And when the red morning is brightning
They bathe in the fresh sunbeam;
They have strength for their swiftness I deem,
They ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.
I desire: and their speed makes night kindle;
I fear: they outstrip the Typhoon;
Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle,
We encircle the earth and the moon:
We shall rest from long labours at noon:
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

SCENE V.

The Car pauses within a cloud on the top of a snowy mountain. ASIA, PANTHEA, *and the* SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

Spirit. On the brink of the night and the morning
My coursers are wont to respire;
But the Earth has just whispered a warning
That their flight must be swifter than fire:
They shall drink the hot speed of desire!

Asia. Thou breathest on their nostrils, but my breath
Would give them swifter speed.

Spirit. Alas! it could not.

Pan. O Spirit! pause, and tell me whence is the light
Which fills the cloud? The sun is yet unrisen.

Spirit. The sun will rise not until noon. Apollo
Is held in heaven by wonder; and the light
Which fills this vapour, as the aerial hue

Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water,
Flows from thy mighty sister.

Pan. Yes, I feel—

Asia. What is it with thee, sister? Thou art pale.

Pan. How thou art changed! I dare not look on thee;
I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure
The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change
Is working in the elements, which suffer
Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell
That on the day when the clear hyaline
Was cloven at thy uprise, and thou didst stand
Within a veined shell, which floated on
Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,
Among the Egean isles, and by the shores
Which bear thy name, Love, like the atmosphere
Of the sun's fire filling the living world,
Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven
And the deep ocean and the sunless caves
And all that dwells within them, till grief cast
Eclipse upon the soul from which it came.
Such art thou now; nor is it I alone,
Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one,
But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.
Hearest thou not sounds i' the air which speak the love
Of all articulate beings? Feelest thou not
The inanimate winds enamoured of thee? List! [*Music.*]

Asia. Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his
Whose echoes they are: yet love is sweet,
Given or returned. Common as light is love,
And its familiar voice wearies not ever.
Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,
It makes the reptile equal to the God:
They who inspire it most are fortunate,

As I am now; but those who feel it most
Are happier still, after long sufferings,
As I shall soon become.

Pan. List! Spirits speak.

Voice in the air, singing.

Life of Life! thy lips enkindle
With their love the breath between them;
And thy smiles before they dwindle
Make the cold air fire; then screen them
In those looks, where whoso gazes
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light! thy lips are burning
Thro' the vest which seems to hide them;
As the radiant lines of morning
Thro' the clouds ere they divide them;
And this atmosphere divinest
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

Fair are others; none beholds thee,
But thy voice sounds low and tender
Like the fairest, for it folds thee
From the sight, that liquid splendor,
And all feel yet see thee never,
As I feel now, lost for ever!

Lamp of Earth! where'er thou movest
Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,
And the souls of whom thou lovest
Walk upon the winds with lightness,
Till they fail, as I am failing,
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing!

Asia. My soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;
And thine doth like an angel sit
Beside the helm conducting it,
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.
It seems to float ever, for ever,
Upon that many-winding river,
Between mountains, woods, abysses,
A paradise of wildernesses!
Till, like one in slumber bound,
Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,
Into a sea profound of ever-spreading sound:
Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions
In music's most serene dominions,
Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven;
And we sail on, away, afar,
Without a course, without a star,
But by the instinct of sweet music driven,
Till through Elysian garden islets
By thee, most beautiful of pilots,
Where never mortal pinnace glided,
The boat of my desire is guided:
Realms where the air we breathe is love,
Which in the winds on the waves doth move,
Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have pass'd Age's icy caves,
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,
And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray:
Beyond the glassy gulphs we flee
Of shadow-peopled Infancy,
Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day;

A paradise of vaulted bowers,
Lit by downward-gazing flowers,
And watery paths that wind between
Wildernesses calm and green,
Peopled by shapes too bright to see,
And rest, having beheld; somewhat like thee;
Which walk upon the sea, and chaunt melodiously!

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Heaven. JUPITER *on his Throne;* THETIS *and the other Deities assembled.*

Jup. Ye congregated powers of heaven, who share
The glory and the strength of him ye serve,
Rejoice! henceforth I am omnipotent.
All else had been subdued to me; alone
The soul of man, like an unextinguished fire,
Yet burns towards heaven with fierce reproach, and doubt,
And lamentation, and reluctant prayer,
Hurling up insurrection, which might make
Our antique empire insecure, though built
On eldest faith and, hell's coeval, fear;
And, tho' my curses thro' the pendulous air,
Like snow on herbless peaks, fall flake by flake,
And cling to it; tho' under my wrath's might
It climb the crags of life, step after step,
Which wound it, as ice wounds unsandalled feet,

It yet remains supreme o'er misery,
Aspiring, unrepressed, yet soon to fall:
Even now have I begotten a strange wonder,
That fatal child, the terror of the earth,
Who waits but till the distant hour arrive,
Bearing from Demogorgon's vacant throne
The dreadful might of ever-living limbs
Which clothed that awful spirit unbeheld,
To redescend, and trample out the spark.

Pour forth heaven's wine, Idæan Ganymede,
And let it fill the Dædal cups like fire,
And from the flower-inwoven soil divine
Ye all-triumphant harmonies arise,
As dew from earth under the twilight stars:
Drink! be the nectar circling thro' your veins
The soul of joy, ye ever-living Gods,
Till exultation burst in one wide voice
Like music from Elysian winds.
And thou
Ascend beside me, veiled in the light
Of the desire which makes thee one with me,
Thetis, bright image of eternity!
When thou didst cry, "Insufferable might!
"God! spare me! I sustain not the quick flames,
"The penetrating presence; all my being,
"Like him whom the Numidian seps did thaw
"Into a dew with poison, is dissolved,
"Sinking thro' its foundations:" even then
Two mighty spirits, mingling, made a third
Mightier than either, which, unbodied now,
Between us floats, felt although unbeheld,
Waiting the incarnation, which ascends,
(Hear ye the thunder of the fiery wheels

Griding the winds?) from Demogorgon's throne.
Victory! victory! Feel'st thou not, O world,
The earthquake of his chariot thundering up
Olympus?

[*The Car of the* Hour *arrives.* Demogorgon *descends, and moves towards the Throne of* Jupiter.

Awful shape, what art thou? Speak!

Dem. Eternity. Demand no direr name.
Descend, and follow me down the abyss.
I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child;
Mightier than thee: and we must dwell together
Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightnings not.
The tyranny of heaven none may retain,
Or reassume, or hold, succeeding thee:
Yet if thou wilt, as 'tis the destiny
Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead,
Put forth thy might.

Jup. Detested prodigy!
Even thus beneath the deep Titanian prisons
I trample thee! Thou lingerest?

Mercy! mercy!
No pity, no release, no respite! Oh,
That thou wouldst make mine enemy my judge,
Even where he hangs, seared by my long revenge,
On Caucasus! He would not doom me thus.
Gentle, and just, and dreadless, is he not
The monarch of the world? What art thou?
No refuge! no appeal!

Sink with me then.
We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,
Even as a vulture and a snake outspent
Drop, twisted in inextricable fight,
Into a shoreless sea. Let hell unlock
Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire,

And whelm on them into the bottomless void
This desolated world, and thee, and me,
The conqueror and the conquered, and the wreck
Of that for which they combated.
Ai! Ai!
The elements obey me not. I sink
Dizzily down, ever, for ever, down!
And, like a cloud, mine enemy above
Darkens my fall with victory! Ai, Ai!

SCENE II.

The mouth of a great river in the island Atlantis. OCEAN *is discovered reclining near the shore;* APOLLO *stands beside him.*

Ocean. He fell, thou sayest, beneath his conqueror's frown?

Apollo. Aye, when the strife was ended which made dim
The orb I rule, and shook the solid stars,
The terrors of his eye illumined heaven
With sanguine light, through the thick ragged skirts
Of the victorious darkness, as he fell:
Like the last glare of day's red agony,
Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds,
Burns far along the tempest-wrinkled deep.

Ocean. He sunk to the abyss? to the dark void?

Apollo. An eagle so caught in some bursting cloud
On Caucasus, his thunder-baffled wings
Entangled in the whirlwind, and his eyes
Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded
By the white lightning, while the ponderous hail

Beats on his struggling form, which sinks at length
Prone, and the aerial ice clings over it.

Ocean. Henceforth the fields of Heaven-reflecting sea,
Which are my realm, will heave, unstain'd with blood,
Beneath the uplifting winds, like plains of corn
Swayed by the summer air; my streams will flow
Round many peopled continents, and round
Fortunate isles; and from their glassy thrones
Blue Proteus and his humid nymphs shall mark
The shadow of fair ships, as mortals see
The floating bark of the light laden moon
With that white star, its sightless pilot's crest,
Borne down the rapid sunset's ebbing sea;
Tracking their path no more by blood, and groans,
And desolation, and the mingled voice
Of slavery and command; but by the light
Of wave-reflected flowers, and floating odours,
And music soft, and mild, free, gentle, voices,
That sweetest music, such as spirits love.

Apollo. And I shall gaze not on the deeds which make
My mind obscure with sorrow, as eclipse
Darkens the sphere I guide. But list, I hear
The small, clear, silver, lute of the young Spirit
That sits on the morning star.

Ocean. Thou must away;
Thy steeds will pause at even, till then farewell:
The loud deep calls me home even now to feed it
With azure calm out of the emerald urns
Which stand for ever full beside my throne.
Behold the Nereids under the green sea,
Their wavering limbs borne on the wind-like stream,
Their white arms lifted o'er their streaming hair
With garlands pied and starry sea-flower crowns,

Hastening to grace their mighty sister's joy.
(*A sound of waves is heard.*)
It is the unpastured sea hungering for calm.
Peace, monster! I come now. Farewell.
Apollo. Farewell.

SCENE III.

Caucasus. PROMETHEUS, HERCULES, IONE, *the* EARTH, SPIRITS, ASIA, *and* PANTHEA, *borne in the car with the* SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

HERCULES *unbinds* PROMETHEUS, *who descends.*

Hercules. Most glorious among spirits, thus doth strength
To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,
And thee, who art the form they animate,
Minister like a slave.
Pro. Thy gentle words
Are sweeter even than freedom long desired
And long delayed.
Asia, thou light of life,
Shadow of beauty unbeheld; and ye,
Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain
Sweet to remember, thro' your love and care;
Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave,
All overgrown with trailing odorous plants,
Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers,
And paved with veined emerald, and a fountain
Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound.
From its curved roof the mountain's frozen tears
Like snow, or silver, or long diamond spires,
Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light:

And there is heard the ever-moving air,
Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,
And bees; and all around are mossy seats,
And the rough walls are clothed with long soft grass,—
A simple dwelling, which shall be our own;
Where we will sit and talk of time and change,
As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged.
What can hide man from mutability?
And if ye sigh, then I will smile; and thou,
Ione, shall chaunt fragments of sea-music,
Until I weep, when ye shall smile away
The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to shed.
We will entangle buds and flowers and beams
Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make
Strange combinations out of common things,
Like human babes in their brief innocence;
And we will search, with looks and words of love,
For hidden thoughts, each lovelier than the last,
Our unexhausted spirits; and, like lutes
Touched by the skill of the enamoured wind,
Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,
From difference sweet where discord cannot be;
And hither come, sped on the charmed winds,
Which meet from all the points of heaven, as bees
From every flower aerial Enna feeds,
At their known island-homes in Himera,
The echoes of the human world, which tell
Of the low voice of love, almost unheard,
And dove-eyed pity's murmured pain, and music,
Itself the echo of the heart, and all
That tempers or improves man's life, now free;
And lovely apparitions, dim at first,
Then radiant as the mind, arising bright
From the embrace of beauty, whence the forms

Of which these are the phantoms, casts on them
The gathered rays which are reality,
Shall visit us, the progeny immortal
Of Painting, Sculpture, and wrapt Poesy,
And Arts, tho' unimagined, yet to be.
The wandering voices and the shadows these
Of all that man becomes, the mediators
Of that best worship love, by him and us
Given and returned; swift shapes and sounds, which grow
More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind,
And, veil by veil, evil and error fall:
Such virtue has the cave and place around.
(Turning to the Spirit of the Hour.)
For thee, fair Spirit, one toil remains. Ione,
Give her that curved shell, which Proteus old
Made Asia's nuptial boon, breathing within it
A voice to be accomplished, and which thou
Didst hide in grass under the hollow rock.

Ione. Thou most desired Hour, more loved and lovely
Than all thy sisters, this is the mystic shell.
See the pale azure fading into silver
Lining it with a soft yet glowing light:
Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there?

Spirit. It seems in truth the fairest shell of Ocean:
Its sound must be at once both sweet and strange.

Pro. Go, borne over the cities of mankind
On whirlwind-footed coursers: once again
Outspeed the sun around the orbed world;
And, as thy chariot cleaves the kindling air,
Thou breathe into the many-folded shell,
Loosening its mighty music; it shall be
As thunder mingled with clear echoes: then
Return, and thou shalt dwell beside our cave.—
And thou, O Mother Earth!—

The Earth. I hear, I feel;
Thy lips are on me, and thy touch runs down
Even to the adamantine central gloom
Along these marble nerves. 'Tis life, 'tis joy,
And, thro' my withered, old, and icy, frame,
The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down
Circling. Henceforth the many children fair
Folded in my sustaining arms; all plants,
And creeping forms, and insects rainbow-winged,
And birds, and beasts, and fish, and human shapes,
Which drew disease and pain from my wan bosom,
Draining the poison of despair; shall take
And interchange sweet nutriment. To me
Shall they become like sister-antelopes
By one fair dam, snow-white and swift as wind
Nursed among lilies near a brimming stream.
The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float
Under the stars like balm: night-folded flowers
Shall suck unwitting hues in their repose:
And men and beasts in happy dreams shall gather
Strength for the coming day, and all its joy:
And death shall be the last embrace of her
Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother,
Folding her child, says, "Leave me not again."

Asia. O mother! wherefore speak the name of death?
Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and speak,
Who die?

The Earth. It would avail not to reply.
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
But to the uncommunicating dead.
Death is the veil which those who live call life:
They sleep, and it is lifted: and meanwhile
In mild variety the seasons mild,
With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,

And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night,
And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's
All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain
Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild,
Shall clothe the forests and the fields, aye, even
The crag-built deserts of the barren deep,
With ever-living leaves, and fruits, and flowers.—
And thou! There is a cavern where my spirit
Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain
Made my heart mad, and those who did inhale it
Became mad too, and built a temple there,
And spoke, and were oracular, and lured
The erring nations round to mutual war,
And faithless faith, such as Jove kept with thee;
Which breath now rises, as amongst tall weeds
A violet's exhalation, and it fills
With a serener light and crimson air,
Intense yet soft, the rocks and woods around;
It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine,
And the dark linked ivy tangling wild,
And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms
Which star the winds with points of coloured light,
As they rain through them, and bright golden globes
Of fruit, suspended in their own green heaven,
And thro' their veined leaves and amber stems
The flowers whose purple and translucid bowls
Stand ever mantling with aërial dew,
The drink of spirits: and it circles round,
Like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams,
Inspiring calm and happy thoughts, like mine,
Now thou art thus restored. This cave is thine.
Arise! Appear!

[*A Spirit rises in the likeness of a winged child.*

This is my torch-bearer,

Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing
On eyes from which he kindled it anew
With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine,
For such is that within thine own. Run, wayward,
And guide this company beyond the peak
Of Bacchic Nysa, Mænad-haunted mountain,
And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers,
Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes
With feet unwet, unwearied, undelaying,
And up the green ravine, across the vale,
Beside the windless and crystalline pool,
Where ever lies, on unerasing waves,
The image of a temple, built above,
Distinct with column, arch, and architrave,
And palm-like capital, and over-wrought
And populous most with living imagery,
Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles
Fill the hushed air with everlasting love.
It is deserted now, but once it bore
Thy name, Prometheus. There the emulous youths
Bore to thy honour thro' the divine gloom
The lamp which was thine emblem; even as those
Who bear the untransmitted torch of hope
Into the grave, across the night of life,
As thou hast borne it most triumphantly
To this far gaol of Time. Depart, farewell.
Beside that temple is the destined cave.

SCENE IV.

A forest. In the background a Cave. PROMETHEUS, ASIA, PANTHEA, IONE, *and the* SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

Ione. Sister, it is not earthly: how it glides
Under the leaves! how on its head there burns
A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams
Are twined with its fair hair! how, as it moves,
The splendor drops in flakes upon the grass!
Knowest thou it?

Pan. It is the delicate spirit
That guides the earth thro' heaven. From afar
The populous constellations call that light
The loveliest of the planets; and sometimes
It floats along the spray of the salt sea,
Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud,
Or walks thro' fields or cities while men sleep,
Or o'er the mountain tops, or down the rivers,
Or thro' the green waste wilderness, as now,
Wondering at all it sees. Before Jove reigned
It loved our sister Asia, and it came
Each leisure hour to drink the liquid light
Out of her eyes, for which it said it thirsted
As one bit by a dipsas, and with her
It made its childish confidence, and told her
All it had known or seen, for it saw much,
Yet idly reasoned what it saw; and called her,
From whence it sprung it knew not, nor do I,
Mother, dear mother.

The Spirit of the Earth, (running to Asia.)
Mother, dearest mother,
May I then talk with thee as I was wont?
May I then hide my eyes in thy soft arms,

After thy looks have made them tired of joy?
May I then play beside thee the long noons,
When work is none in the bright silent air?
Asia. I love thee, gentlest being, and henceforth
Can cherish thee unenvied. Speak, I pray:
Thy simple talk once solaced, now delights.
Spirit of the Earth. Mother, I am grown wiser, though a child
Cannot be wise like thee, within this day,
And happier too; happier and wiser both.
Thou knowest that toads, and snakes, and loathly worms,
And venomous and malicious beasts, and boughs
That bore ill berries in the woods, were ever
A hindrance to my walks o'er the green world;
And that, among the haunts of humankind,
Hard-featured men, or with proud angry looks,
Or cold staid gait, or false and hollow smiles,
Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance,
Or such other foul masks, with which ill thoughts
Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man;
And women too, ugliest of all things evil,
(Tho' fair, even in a world where thou art fair,
When good and kind, free and sincere, like thee,)
When false or frowning made me sick at heart
To pass them, tho' they slept, and I unseen.
Well, my path lately lay thro' a great city
Into the woody hills surrounding it:
A sentinel was sleeping at the gate:
When there was heard a sound, so loud, it shook
The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet
Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all,—
A long, long sound, as it would never end:
And all the inhabitants leapt suddenly
Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets,

Looking in wonder up to Heaven, while yet
The music pealed along. I hid myself
Within a fountain in the public square,
Where I lay like the reflex of the moon
Seen in a wave under green leaves, and soon
Those ugly human shapes and visages,
Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,
Pass'd floating thro' the air, and fading still
Into the winds that scattered them; and those
From whom they pass'd seemed mild and lovely forms
After some foul disguise had fallen, and all
Were somewhat changed; and, after brief surprise
And greetings of delighted wonder, all
Went to their sleep again: and when the dawn
Came, would'st thou think that toads, and snakes, and efts,
Could e'er be beautiful? yet so they were,
And that with little change of shape or hue:
All things had put their evil nature off.—
I cannot tell my joy when, o'er a lake
Upon a drooping bough with night-shade twined,
I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward
And thinning one bright bunch of amber berries,
With quick long beaks, and in the deep there lay
Those lovely forms imaged as in a sky:
So, with my thoughts full of these happy changes,
We meet again, the happiest change of all.

Asia. And never will we part, till thy chaste sister,
Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon,
Will look on thy more warm and equal light
Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow,
And love thee.

Spirit of the Earth. What! as Asia loves Prometheus?

Asia. Peace, wanton! thou art yet not old enough.
Think ye by gazing on each other's eyes

To multiply your lovely selves, and fill
With sphered fires the interlunar air?

Spirit of the Earth. Nay, mother, while my sister trims her lamp
'Tis hard I should go darkling.

Asia. Listen; look!

The SPIRIT OF THE HOUR *enters.*

Pro. We feel what thou hast heard and seen: yet speak.

Spirit of the Hour. Soon as the sound had ceased whose thunder filled
The abysses of the sky and the wide earth,
There was a change: the impalpable thin air
And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,
As if the sense of love dissolved in them
Had folded itself round the sphered world.
My vision then grew clear, and I could see
Into the mysteries of the universe.
Dizzy as with delight I floated down,
Winnowing the lightsome air with languid plumes,
My coursers sought their birth-place in the sun,
Where they henceforth will live exempt from toil,
Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire;
And where my moonlike car will stand within
A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms
Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me,
And you fair nymphs looking the love we feel,
In memory of the tidings it has borne;
Beneath a dome fretted with graven flowers,
Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone,
And open to the bright and liquid sky.
Yoked to it by an amphisbenic snake,
The likeness of those winged steeds will mock
The light from which they find repose. Alas,

Whither has wandered now my partial tongue
When all remains untold which ye would hear?
As I have said I floated to the earth:
It was, as it is still, the pain of bliss
To move, to breathe, to be. I wandering went
Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind,
And first was disappointed not to see
Such mighty change as I had felt within
Expressed in outward things; but soon I looked,
And, behold! thrones were kingless, and men walked
One with the other even as spirits do;
None fawned, none trampled; hate, disdain, or fear,
Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows
No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell,
"All hope abandon ye who enter here;"
None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear
Gazed on another's eye of cold command,
Until the subject of a tyrant's will
Became, worse fate, the abject of his own,
Which spurred him, like an outspent horse, to death.
None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines
Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained to speak;
None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart
The sparks of love and hope till there remained
Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed,
And the wretch crept a vampire among men,
Infecting all with his own hideous ill;
None talked that common, false, cold, hollow, talk
Which makes the heart deny the *yes* it breathes,
Yet question that unmeant hypocrisy
With such a self-mistrust as has no name.
And women too, frank, beautiful, and kind,
As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew
On the wide earth, pass'd; gentle radiant forms,

From custom's evil taint exempt and pure;
Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,
Looking emotions once they feared to feel,
And changed to all which once they dared not be,
Yet being now, made earth like heaven; nor pride,
Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame,
The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,
Spoilt the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

Thrones, altars, judgment-seats, and prisons, wherein,
And beside which, by wretched men were borne
Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes
Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance,
Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes,
The ghosts of a no-more-remembered fame,
Which, from their unworn obelisks, look forth
In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs
Of those who were their conquerors; mouldering round
Those imaged to the pride of kings and priests,
A dark yet mighty faith, a power as wide
As is the world it wasted, and are now
But an astonishment; even so the tools
And emblems of its last captivity,
Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth,
Stand not o'erthrown, but unregarded now.
And those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,
Which, under many a name and many a form,
Strange, savage, ghastly, dark, and execrable,
Where Jupiter, the tyrant of the world;
And which the nations, panic-stricken, served
With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and love
Dragged to his altars soiled and garlandless,
And slain among men's unreclaiming tears,
Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was hate,

Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their abandoned shrines:
The painted veil, by those who were, called life,
Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread,
All men believed and hoped, is torn aside;
The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself, just, gentle, wise: but man
Passionless; nor yet free from guilt or pain,
Which were, for his will made or suffered them,
Nor yet exempt, tho' ruling them like slaves,
From chance, and death, and mutability,
The clogs of that which else might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

Scene, a part of the forest near the Cave of PROMETHEUS. PANTHEA *and* IONE *are sleeping: they awaken gradually during the first Song.*

Voice of unseen Spirits.

The pale stars are gone!
For the sun, their swift shepherd,
To their folds them compelling,
In the depths of the dawn,

Hasten, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee
Beyond his blue dwelling
As fawns flee the leopard.
But where are ye?

A train of dark forms and shadows passes by confusedly, singing.

Here, oh, here!
We bear the bier
Of the Father of many a cancelled year!
Spectres we
Of the dead Hours be,
We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.

Strew, oh, strew
Hair, not yew!
Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew!
Be the faded flowers
Of Death's bare bowers
Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours!

Haste, oh, haste!
As shades are chased,
Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue waste.
We melt away,
Like dissolving spray,
From the children of a diviner day,
With the lullaby
Of winds that die
On the bosom of their own harmony!

Ione. What dark forms were they?

Pan. The past Hours, weak and grey

With the spoil which their toil
Raked together
From the conquest but One could foil.

Ione. Have they pass'd

Pan. They have pass'd;
They outspeeded the blast,
While 'tis said, they are fled.

Ione. Whither, oh, whither?

Pan. To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

Voice of unseen Spirits.

Bright clouds float in heaven,
Dew-stars gleam on earth,
Waves assemble on ocean,
They are gathered and driven
By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee!
They shake with emotion,
They dance in their mirth.
But where are ye?

The pine boughs are singing
Old songs with new gladness,
The billows and fountains
Fresh music are flinging,
Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea;
The storms mock the mountains
With the thunder of gladness.
But where are ye?

Ione. What charioteers are these?

Pan. Where are their chariots?

Semichorus of Hours.

The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth
Have drawn back the figured curtain of sleep
Which covered our being and darkened our birth
In the deep.

A voice. In the deep?

Semichorus II. Oh, below the deep.

Semichorus I. A hundred ages we had been kept
Cradled in visions of hate and care,
And each one who waked as his brother slept
Found the truth

Semichorus II. Worse than his visions were!

Semichorus I. We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep;
We have known the voice of Love in dreams,
We have felt the wand of Power, and leap—

Semichorus II. As the billows leap in the morning beams!

Chorus. Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,
Pierce with song heaven's silent light,
Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,
To check its flight ere the cave of night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds
Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,
And it limped and stumbled with many wounds
Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh weave the mystic measure
Of music, and dance, and shapes of light;
Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure,
Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite.

A voice. Unite!

Pan. See, where the Spirits of the human mind
Wrapt in sweet sounds, as in bright veils, approach.

Chorus of Spirits. We join the throng
Of the dance and the song,
By the whirlwind of gladness borne along;
As the flying-fish leap
From the Indian deep,
And mix with the sea-birds, half-asleep.

Chorus of Hours. Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet,
For sandals of lightning are on your feet,
And your wings are soft and swift as thought,
And your eyes are as love which is veiled not?

Chorus of Spirits. We come from the mind
Of human kind,
Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind;
Now 'tis an ocean
Of clear emotion,
A heaven of serene and mighty motion.

From that deep abyss
Of wonder and bliss,
Whose caverns are crystal palaces;
From those skiey towers
Where Thought's crowned powers
Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours!

From the dim recesses
Of woven caresses,
Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses;
From the azure isles
Where sweet Wisdom smiles,
Delaying your ships with her syren wiles.

From the temples high
Of Man's ear and eye,
Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy;
From the murmurings
Of the unsealed springs
Where Science bedews his Dædal wings.

Years after years,
Through blood, and tears,

And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears;
We waded and flew,
And the islets were few
Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.

Our feet now, every palm,
Are sandall'd with calm,
And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm;
And, beyond our eyes,
The human love lies
Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

Chorus of Spirits and Hours.

Then weave the web of the mystic measure;
From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth
Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure,
Fill the dance and the music of mirth,
As the waves of a thousand streams rush by
To an ocean of splendour and harmony!

Chorus of Spirits. Our spoil is won,
Our task is done,
We are free to dive, or soar, or run;
Beyond and around,
Or within the bound
Which clips the world with darkness round.

We'll pass the eyes
Of the starry skies
Into the hoar deep to colonize:
Death, Chaos, and Night,
From the sound of our flight,
Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.

And Earth, Air, and Light,
And the Spirit of Might,

Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight;
And Love, Thought, and Breath,
The powers that quell Death,
Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build
In the void's loose field
A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield;
We will take our plan
From the new world of man,
And our work shall be called the Promethean.

Chorus of Hours. Break the dance, and scatter the song;
Let some depart, and some remain.

Semichorus I. We, beyond heaven, are driven along:

Semichorus II. Us the enchantments of earth retain:

Semichorus I. Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free,
With the Spirirs which build a new earth and sea,
And a heaven where yet heaven could never be.

Semichorus II. Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright,
Leading the Day and outspeeding the Night,
With the powers of a world of perfect light,

Semichorus I. We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere,
Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds, appear,
From its chaos, made calm by love, not fear.

Semichorus II. We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,
And the happy forms of its death and birth
Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

Chorus of Hours and Spirits.

Break the dance, and scatter the song,
Let some depart, and some remain;
Wherever we fly we lead along

In leashes, like star-beams, soft yet strong,
The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain,

Pan. Ha! they are gone!

Ione. Yet feel you no delight
From the past sweetness?

Pan. As the bare green hill,
When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,
Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water
To the unpavilioned sky!

Ione. Even whilst we speak
New notes arise. What is that awful sound?

Pan. 'Tis the deep music of the rolling world
Kindling within the strings of the waved air
Æolian modulations.

Ione Listen too,
How every pause is filled with under-notes,
Clear, silver, icy, keen, awakening, tones,
Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,
As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air,
And gaze upon themselves within the sea.

Pan. But see where through two openings in the forest,
Which hanging branches overcanopy,
And where two runnels of a rivulet,
Between the close moss violet-inwoven,
Have made their path of melody, like sisters
Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,
Turning their dear disunion to an isle
Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts;
Two visions of strange radiance float upon
The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound,
Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet,
Under the ground and through the windless air.

Ione. I see a chariot like that thinnest boat,
In which the mother of the months is borne

By ebbing night into her western cave,
When she upsprings from interlunar dreams,
O'er which is curved an orblike canopy
Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods
Distinctly seen through that dusk airy veil
Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass;
Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,
Such as the genii of the thunder-storm
Pile on the floor of the illumined sea
When the sun rushes under it; they roll
And move and grow as with an inward wind.
Within it sits a winged infant; white
Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow;
Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost;
Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds
Of its white robe, woof of ætherial pearl.
Its hair is white, the brightness of white light
Scattered in string; yet its two eyes are heavens
Of liquid darkness, which the Deity
Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured
From jagged clouds out of their arrowy lashes,
Tempering the cold and radiant air around
With fire that is not brightness; in its hand
It sways a quivering moon-beam, from whose point
A guiding power directs the chariot's prow
Over its wheeled clouds, which as they roll,
Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds
Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew.

Pan. And from the other opening in the wood
Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,
A sphere, which is, as many thousand spheres,
Solid as chrystal, yet through all its mass
Flow, as through empty space, music and light:
Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,

Purple and azure, white, green, and golden,
Sphere within sphere; and every space between
Peopled with unimaginable shapes,
Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep,
Yet each inter-transpicuous, and they whirl
Over each other with a thousand motions,
Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,
And with the force of self-destroying swiftness,
Intensely, slowly, solemnly, roll on,
Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,
Intelligible words and music wild.
With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb
Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist
Of elemental subtlety, like light;
And the wild odour of the forest flowers,
The music of the living grass and air,
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed,
Seem kneaded into one aërial mass
Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,
Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,
Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,
On its own folded wings and wavy hair,
The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep,
And you can see its little lips are moving,
Amid the changing light of their own smiles,
Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.

Ione. 'Tis only mocking the orb's harmony.

Pan. And from a star upon its forehead shoot,
Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears
With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtwined,
Embleming heaven and earth united now,
Vast beams like smoke of some invisible wheel
Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought,

Filling the abyss with sun-like lightnings,
And perpendicular now, and now transverse,
Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass
Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart;
Infinite mine of adamant and gold,
Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,
And caverns on crystalline columns poured
With vegetable silver overspread;
Wells of unfathomed fire, and water springs
Whence the great sea, even as a child is fed,
Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops
With kingly ermine snow. The beams flash on
And make appear the melancholy ruins
Of cancelled cycles; anchors, beaks of ships;
Planks turned to marble; quivers, helms, and spears,
And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels
Of scythed chariots, and the emblazonry
Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,
Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems
Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin!
The wrecks beside of many a city vast,
Whose population which the earth grew over
Was mortal, but not human; see, they lie
Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,
Their statues, homes, and fanes; prodigious shapes,
Huddled in grey annihilation, split,
Jammed in the hard black deep; and over these
The anatomies of unknown winged things,
And fishes which were isles of living scale,
And serpents, bony chains, twisted around
The iron crags, or within heaps of dust
To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs
Had crushed the iron crags; and over these

The jagged alligator, and the might
Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once
Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,
And weed-overgrown continents of earth,
Increased and multiplied like summer worms
On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe
Wrapt deluge round it like a cloke, and they
Yelled, gasped, and were abolished; or some God,
Whose throne was in a comet, pass'd, and cried,
Be not! And like my words they were no more.

The Earth. The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness!
The boundless, overflowing, bursting, gladness,
The vaporous exultation not to be confined!
Ha! ha! the animation of delight
Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,
And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

The Moon. Brother mine, calm wanderer,
Happy globe of land and air,
Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee,
Which penetrates my frozen frame,
And passes with the warmth of flame,
With love, and odour, and deep melody,
Through me, through me!

The Earth. Ha! ha! the caverns of my hollow mountains,
My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains,
Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.
The oceans, and the deserts, and the abysses,
And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,
Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing after.

They cry aloud as I do: Sceptred curse,
Who all our green and azure universe
Threatenedst to muffle round with black destruction, sending
A solid cloud to rain hot thunder-stones,

And splinter and knead down my children's bones,
All I bring forth, to one void mass battering and blending,

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column,
Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn,
My imperial mountains crowned with cloud, and snow, and fire,
My sea-like forests, every blade and blossom
Which finds a grave or cradle in my bosom,
Were stamped by thy strong hate into a lifeless mire.

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, covered, drunk up
By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup
Drained by a desert-troop, a little drop for all;
And from beneath, around, within, above,
Filling thy void annihilation, love
Bursts in like light on caves cloven by thunder-ball.

The Moon. The snow upon my lifeless mountains
Is loosened into living fountains,
My solid oceans flow, and sing, and shine:
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,
It clothes with unexpected birth
My cold bare bosom: Oh! it must be thine
On mine, on mine!

Gazing on thee I feel, I know
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,
And living shapes upon my bosom move:
Music is in the sea and air,
Winged clouds soar here and there,
Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of:
'Tis love, all love!

The Earth. It interpenetrates my granite mass,
Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass
Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers;
Upon the winds, among the clouds, 'tis spread,
It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,
They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest bowers;

And like a storm bursting its cloudy prison
With thunder, and with whirlwind, has arisen
Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being:
With earthquake shock and swiftness making shiver
Thought's stagnant chaos, unremoved for ever,
Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished shadows, fleeing,

Leave Man, who was a many-sided mirror,
Which could distort to many a shape of error
This true fair world of things, a sea reflecting love;
Which over all his kind, as the sun's heaven
Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene, and even,
Darting from starry depths radiance and light, doth move;

Leave man, even as a leprous child is left,
Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft
Of rocks, through which the might of healing springs is poured;
Then, when it wanders home with rosy smile,
Unconscious, and its mother fears awhile
It is a spirit, then, weeps on her child restored.

Man, oh, not men! a chain of linked thought,
Of love and might to be divided not,
Compelling the elements with adamantine stress;

As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,
The unquiet republic of the maze
Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free wilderness.

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,
Whose nature is its own divine controul,
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea;
Familiar acts are beautiful through love;
Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they could be!

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,
And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,
A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,
Is as a tempest-winged ship, whose helm
Love rules, through waves which dare not overwhelm,
Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the cold mass
Of marble and of colour his dreams pass;
Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes their children wear;
Language is a perpetual orphic song,
Which rules with Dædal harmony a throng
Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shapeless were.

The lightning is his slave; heaven's utmost deep
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep
They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on!
The tempest is his steed; he strides the air,
And the abyss shouts, from her depth laid bare,
Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man unveils me; I have none.

The Moon. The shadow of white death has pass'd
From my path in heaven at last,
A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep;
And through my newly-woven bowers
Wander happy paramours,
Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep
Thy vales more deep.

The Earth. As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold
A half infrozen dew-globe, green, and gold,
And crystalline, till it becomes a winged mist,
And wanders up the vault of the blue day,
Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

The Moon. Thou art folded, thou art lying
In the light which is undying
Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine;
All suns and constellations shower
On thee a light, a life, a power,
Which doth array thy sphere; thou pourest thine
On mine, on mine!

The Earth. I spin beneath my pyramid of night,
Which points into the heavens dreaming delight,
Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep;
As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing,
Under the shadow of his beauty lying,
Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth doth keep.

The Moon. As in the soft and sweet eclipse,
When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,
High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull,
So, when thy shadow falls on me,
Then am I mute and still, by thee
Covered; of thy love, Orb most beautiful,
Full, oh, too full!

Thou art speeding round the sun
Brightest world of many a one;
Green and azure sphere which shinest
With a light which is divinest
Among all the lamps of Heaven
To whom life and light is given;
I, thy crystal paramour,
Borne beside thee by a power
Like the polar Paradise,
Magnet-like, of lovers' eyes;
I, a most enamour'd maiden,
Whose weak brain is overladen
With the pleasure of her love,
Maniac-like around thee move
Gazing, an insatiate bride,
On thy form from every side,
Like a Mænad, round the cup
Which Agave lifted up
In the wierd Cadmæan forest.
Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest
I must hurry, whirl and follow
Through the heavens wide and hollow,
Sheltered by the warm embrace
Of thy soul from hungry space,
Drinking from thy sense and sight
Beauty, majesty, and might,
As a lover or cameleon
Grows like what it looks upon,
As a violet's gentle eye
Gazes on the azure sky
Until its hue grows like what it beholds,
As a grey and watery mist
Glows like solid amethyst

Athwart the western mountain it enfolds,
When the sunset sleeps
Upon its snow.

The Earth. And the weak day weeps
That it should be so.
O gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight
Falls on me like thy clear and tender light
Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night
Through isles for ever calm;
O gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce
The caverns of my pride's deep universe,
Charming the tiger joy, whose tramplings fierce
Made wounds which need thy balm.

Pan. I rise as from a bath of sparkling water,
A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,
Out of the stream of sound.

Ione. Ah me! sweet sister,
The stream of sound has ebbed away from us,
And you pretend to rise out of its wave,
Because your words fall like the clear soft dew
Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph's limbs and hair.

Pan. Peace! peace! A mighty Power, which is as darkness
Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky
Is showered like night, and from within the air
Bursts, like eclipse which had been gathered up
Into the pores of sunlight: the bright visions,
Wherein the singing spirits rode and shone,
Gleam like pale meteors through a watery night.

Ione. There is a sense of words upon mine ear.

Pan. A universal sound like words: Oh, list!

Dem. Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul!
Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies,
Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll
The love which paves thy path along the skies:

The Earth. I hear: I am as a drop of dew that dies.
Dem. Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth
With wonder, as it gazes upon thee;
Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony:
The Moon. I hear: I am a leaf shaken by thee!
Dem. Ye kings of suns and stars! Dæmons and Gods,
Ætherial Domination! who possess
Elysian, windless, fortunate, abodes
Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness:
A Voice from above.
Our great Republic hears; we are blest, and bless.
Dem. Ye happy dead! whom beams of brightest verse
Are clouds to hide, not colours to pourtray,
Whether your nature is that universe
Which once ye saw and suffered—
A Voice from beneath. Or as they
Whom we have left, we change and pass away.
Dem. Ye elemental Genii, who have homes
From man's high mind even to the central stone
Of sullen lead; from Heaven's star-fretted domes
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on:
A confused Voice.
We hear: thy words waken Oblivion.
Dem. Spirits! whose homes are flesh: ye beasts and birds,
Ye worms and fish; ye living leaves and buds;
Lightning and wind; and ye untameable herds,
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes:
A Voice. Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.
Dem. Man, who wert once a despot and a slave;
A dupe and a deceiver; a decay;
A traveller from the cradle to the grave
Through the dim night of this immortal day:

All. Speak! thy strong words may never pass away.
Dem. This is the day, which down the void abysm
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,
And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep:
Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
Of dead endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow, verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his length,
These are the spells by which to re-assume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor flatter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan! is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory!

END OF PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

A VISION OF THE SEA.

'Tis the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail
Are flickering in ribbons within the fierce gale:
From the stark night of vapours the dim rain is driven,
And, when lightning is loosed, like a deluge from heaven,
She sees the black trunks of the water-spouts spin,
And bend, as if heaven was raining in,
Which they seem'd to sustain with their terrible mass
As if ocean had sunk from beneath them: they pass
To their graves in the deep with an earthquake of sound,
And the waves and the thunders, made silent around,
Leave the wind to its echo. The vessel, now toss'd
Through the low-trailing rack of the tempest, is lost
In the skirts of the thunder-cloud: now down the sweep
Of the wind-cloven wave to the chasm of the deep
It sinks, and the walls of the watery vale
Whose depths of dread calm are unmoved by the gale,
Dim mirrors of ruin hang gleaming about;
While the surf, like a chaos of stars, like a rout
Of death-flames, like whirlpools of fire-flowing iron,
With splendor and terror the black ship environ,
Or, like sulphur-flakes hurl'd from a mine of pale fire,
In fountains spout o'er it. In many a spire
The pyramid-billows, with white points of brine,
In the cope of the lightning inconstantly shine,

As piercing the sky from the floor of the sea.
The great ship seems splitting! it cracks as a tree,
While an earthquake is splintering its root, ere the blast
Of the whirlwind that stripp'd it of branches has past.
The intense thunder-balls which are raining from heaven
Have shatter'd its mast, and it stands black and riven.
The chinks suck destruction. The heavy dead hulk
On the living sea rolls an inanimate bulk,
Like a corpse on the clay which is hung'ring to fold
Its corruption around it. Meanwhile, from the hold,
One deck is burst up from the waters below,
And it splits like the ice when the thaw-breezes blow
O'er the lakes of the desert! Who sit on the other?
Is that all the crew that lie burying each other,
Like the dead in a breach, round the foremast? Are those
Twin tigers, who burst, when the waters arose,
In the agony of terror, their chains in the hold;
(What now makes them tame, is what then made them bold;)
Who crouch side by side, and have driven, like a crank,
The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating plank?
Are these all? Nine weeks the tall vessel had lain
On the windless expanse of the watery plain,
Where the death-darting sun cast no shadow at noon,
And there seem'd to be fire in the beams of the moon,
Till a lead-colour'd fog gather'd up from the deep,
Whose breath was quick pestilence; then the cold sleep
Crept, like blight through the ears of a thick field of corn,
O'er the populous vessel. And even and morn,
With their hammocks for coffins the seamen aghast
Like dead men the dead limbs of their comrades cast
Down the deep, which closed on them above and around,
And the sharks and the dog-fish their grave-clothes unbound,
And were glutted like Jews with this manna rain'd down
From God on their wilderness. One after one

The mariners died; on the eve of this day,
When the tempest was gathering in cloudy array,
But seven remain'd. Six the thunder had smitten,
And they lie black as mummies on which Time has written
His scorn of the embalmer; the seventh, from the deck
An oak-splinter pierced through his breast and his back,
And hung out to the tempest a wreck on the wreck.
No more? At the helm sits a woman more fair
Than heaven, when, unbinding its star-braided hair,
It sinks with the sun on the earth and the sea.
She clasps a bright child on her upgather'd knee:
It laughs at the lightning, it mocks the mixed thunder
Of the air and the sea; with desire and with wonder
It is beckoning the tigers to rise and come near;
It would play with those eyes where the radiance of fear
Is outshining the meteors; its bosom beats high,
The heart-fire of pleasure has kindled its eye,
Whilst its mother's is lustreless. "Smile not, my child,
"But sleep deeply and sweetly, and so be beguiled
"Of the pang that awaits us, whatever that be,
"So dreadful since thou must divide it with me!
"Dream, sleep! This pale bosom, thy cradle and bed,
"Will it rock thee not, infant? 'Tis beating with dread!
"Alas! what is life, what is death, what are we,
"That when the ship sinks we no longer may be!
"What! to see thee no more, and to feel thee no more?
"To be after life what we have been before?
"Not to touch those sweet hands? Not to look on those eyes,
"Those lips, and that hair, all that smiling disguise
"Thou yet wearest, sweet spirit, which I, day by day,
"Have so long called my child, but which now fades away
"Like a rainbow, and I the fallen shower?"—Lo! the ship
Is settling, it topples, the leeward ports dip;
The tigers leap up when they feel the slow brine

Crawling inch by inch on them, hair, ears, limbs, and eyne,
Stand rigid with horror; a loud, long, hoarse, cry
Bursts at once from their vitals tremendously,
And 'tis borne down the mountainous vale of the wave,
Rebounding, like thunder, from crag to cave,
Mixed with the clash of the lashing rain,
Hurried on by the might of the hurricane.
The hurricane came from the west, and pass'd on
By the path of the gate of the eastern sun,
Transversely dividing the stream of the storm;
As an arrowy serpent, pursuing the form
Of an elephant, bursts through the brakes of the waste.
Black as a cormorant the screaming blast,
Between ocean and heaven, like an ocean, pass'd,
Till it came to the clouds on the verge of the world,
Which, bas'd on the sea and to heaven upcurl'd,
Like columns and walls did surround and sustain
The dome of the tempest; it rent them in twain,
As a flood rends its barriers of mountainous crag:
And the dense clouds in many a ruin and rag,
Like the stones of a temple ere earthquake has past,
Like the dust of its fall, on the whirlwind are cast;
They are scatter'd like foam on the torrent; and where
The wind has burst out through the chasm, from the air
Of clear morning, the beams of the sunrise flow in,
Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,
Banded armies of light and of air; at one gate
They encounter, but interpenetrate.
And that breach in the tempest is widening away,
And the caverns of clouds are torn up by the day,
And the fierce winds are sinking with weary wings,
Lulled by the motion and murmurings,
And the long glassy heave of the rocking sea,
And over head glorious, but dreadful to see

The wrecks of the tempest, like vapours of gold,
Are consuming in sunrise. The heaped waves behold
The deep calm of blue heaven dilating above,
And, like passions made still by the presence of Love,
Beneath the clear surface reflecting it slide
Tremulous with soft influence; extending its tide
From the Andes to Atlas, round mountain and isle,
Round sea-birds and wrecks, paved with heaven's azure smile,
The wide world of waters is vibrating. Where
Is the ship? On the verge of the wave where it lay
One tiger is mingled in ghastly affray
With a sea-snake. The foam and the smoke of the battle
Stain the clear air with sunbows: the jar, and the rattle
Of solid bones crush'd by the infinite stress
Of the snake's adamantine voluminousness,
And the hum of the hot blood that spouts and rains
Where the gripe of the tiger has wounded the veins,
Swollen with rage, strength, and effort; the whirl and the splash
As of some hideous engine whose brazen teeth smash
The thin winds and soft waves into thunder; the screams
And hissings crawl fast o'er the smooth ocean streams,
Each sound like a centipede. Near this commotion,
A blue shark is hanging within the blue ocean,
The fin-winged tomb of the victor. The other
Is winning his way from the fate of his brother,
To his own with the speed of despair. Lo! a boat
Advances; twelve rowers with the impulse of thought
Urge on the keen keel,—the brine foams. At the stern
Three marksmen stand levelling. Hot bullets burn
In the breast of the tiger, which yet bears him on
To his refuge and ruin. One fragment alone,
'Tis dwindling and sinking, 'tis now almost gone,
Of the wreck of the vessel peers out of the sea.

With her left hand she grasps it impetuously,
With her right she sustains her fair infant. Death, Fear,
Love, Beauty, are mixed in the atmosphere,
Which trembles and burns with the fervour of dread
Around her wild eyes, her bright hand, and her head,
Like a meteor of light o'er the waters! Her child
Is yet smiling, and playing, and murmuring; so smiled
The false deep ere the storm. Like a sister and brother
The child and the ocean still smile on each other,
Whilst———

ODE TO HEAVEN.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

First Spirit. PALACE-ROOF of cloudless nights!
Paradise of golden lights!
Deep, immeasurable, vast,
Which art now, and which wert then!
Of the present and the past,
Of the eternal where and when,
Presence-chamber, temple, home,
Ever-canopying dome,
Of acts and ages yet to come!

Glorious shapes have life in thee,
Earth, and all earth's company;
Living globes which ever throng
Thy deep chasms and wildernessess;
And green worlds that glide along;
And swift stars with flashing tresses;
And icy moons most cold and bright,

And mighty suns beyond the night,
Atoms of intensest light.

Even thy name is as a god,
Heaven! for thou art the abode
Of that power which is the glass
Wherein man his nature sees.
Generations as they pass
Worship thee with bended knees.
Their unremaining gods and they
Like a river roll away:
Thou remainest such alway.

Second Spirit. Thou art but the mind's first chamber,
Round which its young fancies clamber,
Like weak insects in a cave,
Lighted up by stalactites;
But the portal of the grave,
Where a world of new delights
Will make thy best glories seem
But a dim and noonday gleam
From the shadow of a dream!

Third Spirit. Peace! the abyss is wreathed with scorn
At your presumption, atom-born!
What is heaven? and what are ye
Who its brief expanse inherit?
What are suns and spheres which flee
With the instinct of that spirit
Of which ye are but a part?
Drops which Nature's mighty heart
Drives through thinnest veins. Depart!

What is heaven? a globe of dew,
Filling in the morning new
Some eyed flower, whose young leaves waken
On an unimagined world:
Constellated suns unshaken,
Orbits measureless, are furled
In that frail and fading sphere,
With ten millions gathered there,
To tremble, gleam, and disappear.

AN EXHORTATION.

Camelions feed on light and air:
Poets' food is love and fame:
If in this wide world of care
Poets could but find the same
With as little toil as they,
Would they ever change their hue
As the light camelions do,
Suiting it to every ray
Twenty times a-day?

Poets are on this cold earth,
As camelions might be,
Hidden from their early birth
In a cave beneath the sea;
Where light is camelions change;
Where love is not, poets do:
Fame is love disguised: if few
Find either, never think it strange
That poets range.

Yet dare not stain with wealth or power
A poet's free and heavenly mind:
If bright camelions should devour
Any food but beams and wind,
They would grow as earthly soon
As their brother lizards are.
Children of a sunnier star,
Spirits from beyond the moon,
Oh, refuse the boon!

ODE TO THE WEST WIND.*

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

* This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset, with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions.

The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of the third stanza is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes, sympathises with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it.

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which are moving every where;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear!

II. Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail, will burst: Oh hear!

III. Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foilage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: Oh hear!

IV. If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontroulable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision, I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V. Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth;
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

AN ODE,

Written, October, 1819, before the Spaniards had recovered their Liberty.

Arise, arise, arise!
There is blood on the earth that denies ye bread;
Be your wounds like eyes
To weep for the dead, the dead, the dead.
What other grief were it just to pay?
Your sons, your wives, your brethren, were they
Who said they were slain on the battle day?

Awaken, awaken, awaken!
The slave and the tyrant are twin-born foes;
Be the cold chains shaken
To the dust where your kindred repose, repose:
Their bones in the grave will start and move,

When they hear the voices of those they love
Most loud in the holy combat above.

Wave, wave high the banner!
When freedom is riding to conquest by:
Though the slaves that fan her
Be famine and toil, giving sigh for sigh.
And ye, who attend her imperial car,
Lift not your hands in the banded war,
But in her defence whose children ye are.

Glory, glory, glory,
To those who have greatly suffered and done!
Never name in story
Was greater than that which ye shall have won.
Conquerors have conquered their foes alone,
Whose revenge, pride, and power, they have overthrown:
Ride ye, more victorious, over your own.

Bind, bind every brow
With crownals of violet, ivy, and pine:
Hide the blood-stains now
With hues which sweet nature has made divine:
Green strength, azure hope, and eternity:
But let not the pansy among them be;
Ye were injured, and that means memory.

THE CLOUD.

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noon-day dreams.

From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet birds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers
Lightning my pilot sits,
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead.

As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings,
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbed maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And, wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanos are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.

The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of the earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when, with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I rise and upbuild it again.

TO A SKYLARK.

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightning,
Thou dost float and run,
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad day-light
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight.

Keen are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,

Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower;

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embower'd
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflower'd,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged thieves

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass:

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard,
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymenæal,
Or triumphal chaunt,

Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt,—
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever could come near.

Better than all measures
Of delight and sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

LINES

WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS,

October, 1818.

Many a green isle needs must be
In the deep wide sea of misery,
Or the mariner, worn and wan,
Never thus could voyage on
Day and night, and night and day,
Drifting on his dreary way,
With the solid darkness black
Closing round his vessel's track;
Whilst above, the sunless sky,
Big with clouds, hangs heavily,
And behind the tempest fleet
Hurries on with lightning feet,
Riving sail, and cord, and plank,
Till the ship has almost drank

Death from the o'er-brimming deep;
And sinks down, down, like that sleep
When the dreamer seems to be
Weltering through eternity;
And the dim low line before
Of a dark and distant shore
Still recedes, as ever still
Longing with divided will,
But no power to seek or shun,
He is ever drifted on
O'er the unreposing wave
To the haven of the grave.
What, if there no friends will greet;
What, if there no heart will meet
His with love's impatient beat;
Wander wheresoe'er he may,
Can he dream before that day
To find refuge from distress
In friendship's smile, in love's caress?
Then 'twill wreak him little woe
Whether such there be or no:
Senseless is the breast, and cold,
Which relenting love would fold;
Bloodless are the veins and chill
Which the pulse of pain did fill;
Every little living nerve
That from bitter words did swerve
Round the tortured lips and brow,
Are like sapless leaflets now
Frozen upon December's bough.
On the beach of a northen sea
Which tempests shake eternally,
As once the wretch there lay to sleep,
Lies a solitary heap,

One white skull and seven dry bones,
On the margin of the stones,
Where a few grey rushes stand,
Boundaries of the sea and land:
Nor is heard one voice of wail
But the sea-mews, as they sail
O'er the billows of the gale;
Or the whirlwind up and down
Howling, like a slaughter'd town,
When a king in glory rides
Through the pomp of fratricides:
Those unburied bones around
There is many a mournful sound;
There is no lament for him,
Like a sunless vapour, dim,
Who once clothed with life and thought
What now moves nor murmurs not.

Aye, many flowering islands lie
In the waters of wide Agony:
To such a one this morn was led
My bark, by soft winds piloted.
'Mid the mountains Euganean
I stood listening to the pæan,
With which the legioned rooks did hail
The sun's uprise majestical;
Gathering round with wings all hoar,
Thro' the dewy mist they soar
Like grey shades, till th' eastern heaven
Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,
Flecked with fire and azure, lie
In the unfathomable sky,
So their plumes of purple grain,
Starred with drops of golden rain,

Gleam above the sunlight woods,
As in silent multitudes
On the morning's fitful gale
Thro' the broken mist they sail,
And the vapours cloven and gleaming
Follow down the dark steep streaming,
Till all is bright, and clear, and still,
Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea
The waveless plain of Lombardy,
Bounded by the vaporous air,
Islanded by cities fair;
Underneath day's azure eyes
Ocean's nursling, Venice, lies—
A peopled labyrinth of walls,
Amphitrite's destined halls,
Which her hoary sire now paves
With his blue and beaming waves.
Lo! the sun upsprings behind,
Broad, red, radiant, half-reclined
On the level quivering line
Of the waters crystalline;
And before that chasm of light,
As within a furnace bright,
Column, tower, and dome, and spire,
Shine like obelisks of fire,
Pointing with inconstant motion
From the altar of dark ocean
To the sapphire-tinted skies;
As the flames of sacrifice
From the marble shrines did rise,
As to pierce the dome of gold
Where Apollo spoke

Sun-girt City, thou hast been
Ocean's child, and then his queen;
Now is come a darker day,
And thou soon must be his prey,
If the power that raised thee here
Hallow so thy watery bier.
A less drear ruin then than now,
With thy conquest-branded brow
Stooping to the slave of slaves
From thy throne, among the waves
Wilt thou be, when the sea-mew
Flies, as once before it flew,
O'er thine isles depopulate,
And all is in its ancient state,
Save where many a palace gate,
With green sea-flowers overgrown,
Like a rock of ocean's own,
Topples o'er the abandoned sea
As the tides change sullenly.
The fisher on his watery way,
Wandering at the close of day,
Will spread his sail and seize his oar
Till he pass the gloomy shore,
Lest thy dead should, from their sleep
Bursting o'er the starlight deep,
Lead a rapid masque of death
O'er the waters of his path.

Those who alone thy towers behold
Quivering through aerial gold,
As I now behold them here,
Would imagine not they were
Sepulchres, where human forms,
Like pollution-nourished worms

To the corpse of greatness cling,
Murdered, and now mouldering:
But if Freedom should awake
In her omnipotence, and shake
From the Celtic Anarch's hold
All the keys of dungeons cold,
Where a hundred cities lie
Chained like thee ingloriously,
Thou and all thy sister band
Might adorn this sunny land,
Twining memories of old time
With new virtues more sublime;
If not, perish thou and they,
Clouds which stain truth's rising day
By her sun consumed away,
Earth can spare ye: while like flowers,
In the waste of years and hours,
From your dust new nations spring
With more kindly blossoming.

Perish! let there only be
Floating o'er thy hearthless sea,
As the garment of thy sky
Clothes the world immortally,
One remembrance, more sublime
Than the tattered pall of Time,
Which scarce hides thy visage wan;
That a tempest-cleaving swan
Of the songs of Albion,
Driven from his ancestral streams
By the might of evil dreams,
Found a nest in thee; and Ocean
Welcomed him with such emotion
That its joy grew his, and sprung

From his lips like music flung
O'er a mighty thunder-fit,
Chastening terror: what though yet
Poesy's unfailing river,
Which through Albion winds for ever,
Lashing with melodious wave
Many a sacred poet's grave,
Mourn its latest nursling fled!
What though thou with all thy dead
Scarce can for this fame repay
Aught thine own,—oh, rather say,
Though thy sins and slaveries foul
Overcloud a sunlike soul!
As the ghost of Homer clings
Round Scamander's wasting springs;
As divinest Shakespeare's might
Fills Avon and the world with light
Like omniscient power, which he
Imaged 'mid mortality;
As the love from Petrarch's urn
Yet amid yon hills doth burn,
A quenchless lamp, by which the heart
Sees things unearthly; so thou art,
Mighty spirit: so shall be
The city that did refuge thee.

Lo, the sun floats up the sky,
Like thought-winged Liberty,
Till the universal light
Seems to level plain and height;
From the sea a mist has spread,
And the beams of morn lie dead
On the towers of Venice now,
Like its glory long ago,

By the skirts of that grey cloud
Many-domed Padua proud
Stands, a peopled solitude,
'Mid the harvest shining plain,
Where the peasant heaps his grain
In the garner of his foe,
And the milk-white oxen slow
With the purple vintage strain,
Heaped upon the creaking wain,
That the brutal Celt may swill
Drunken sleep with savage will;
And the sickle to the sword
Lies unchanged, though many a lord,
Like a weed whose shade is poison,
Overgrows this region's foison,
Sheaves of whom are ripe to come
To destruction's harvest-home;
Men must reap the things they sow,
Force from force must ever flow,
Or worse; but 'tis a bitter woe
That love or reason cannot change
The despot's rage, the slave's revenge.

Padua, thou, within whose walls
Those mute guests at festivals,
Son and Mother, Death and Sin,
Played at dice for Ezzelin,
Till Death cried, "I win, I win!"
And Sin cursed to lose the wager,
But Death promised, to assuage her,
That he would petition for
Her to be made Vice-Emperor,
When the destined years were o'er,

Over all between the Po
And the eastern Alpine snow,
Under the mighty Austrian,
Sin smiled so as Sin only can,
And since that time, aye, long before,
Both have ruled from shore to shore
That incestuous pair, who follow
Tyrants as the sun the swallow,
As Repentance follows Crime,
And as changes follow Time.

In thine halls the lamp of learning,
Padua, now no more is burning;
Like a meteor, whose wild way
Is lost over the grave of day,
It gleams betrayed and to betray:
Once remotest nations came
To adore that sacred flame,
When it lit not many a hearth
On this cold and gloomy earth:
Now fires from antique light
Spring beneath the wide world's might;
But their spark lies dead in thee,
Trampled out by tyranny.
As the Norway woodman quells,
In the depth of piny dells,
One light flame among the brakes,
While the boundless forest shakes,
And its mighty trunks are torn
By the fire thus lowly born:
The spark beneath his feet is dead,
He starts to see the flames it fed

Howling through the darkened sky
With a myriad tongues victoriously,
And sinks down in fear: so thou,
O tyranny, beholdest now
Light around thee, and thou hearest
The loud flames ascend, and fearest:
Grovel on the earth: aye, hide
In the dust thy purple pride!

Noon descends around me now:
'Tis the noon of autumn's glow,
When a soft and purple mist
Like a vaporous amethyst,
Or an air-dissolved star
Mingling light and fragrance, far
From the curved horizon's bound
To the point of heaven's profound,
Fills the overflowing sky;
And the plains that silent lie
Underneath, the leaves unsodden
Where the infant frost has trodden
With his morning-winged feet,
Whose bright print is gleaming yet;
And the red and golden vines,
Piercing with their trellised lines
The rough dark-skirted wilderness;
The dun and bladed grass no less,
Pointing from this hoary tower
In the windless air; the flower
Glimmering at my feet; the line
Of the olive-sandalled Apennine
In the south dimly islanded;
And the Alps, whose snows are spread

High between the clouds and sun;
And of living things each one;
And my spirit, which so long
Darken'd this swift stream of song,
Interpenetrated lie
By the glory of the sky:
Be it love, light, harmony,
Odour, or the soul of all
Which from heaven like dew doth fall,
Or the mind which feeds this verse
Peopling the lone universe.

Noon descends, and after noon
Autumn's evening meets me soon,
Leading the infantine moon,
And that one star, which to her
Almost seems to minister
Half the crimson light she brings
From the sunset's radiant springs:
And the soft dreams of the morn
(Which like winged winds had borne
To that silent isle, which lies
'Mid remembered agonies,
The frail bark of this lone being)
Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,
And its ancient pilot, Pain,
Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be
In the sea of life and agony:
Other spirits float and flee
O'er that gulph: even now, perhaps,
On some rock the wild wave wraps,

With folded wings they waiting sit
For my bark, to pilot it
To some calm and blooming cove,
Where for me, and those I love,
May a windless bower be built,
Far from passion, pain, and guilt,
In a dell 'mid lawny hills,
Which the wild sea-murmur fills,
And soft sunshine, and the sound
Of old forests echoing round,
And the light and smell divine
Of all flowers that breathe and shine:
We may live so happy there,
That the spirits of the air,
Envying us, may even entice
To our healing paradise
The polluting multitude;
But their rage would be subdued
By that clime divine and calm,
And the winds whose wings rain balm
On the uplifted soul, and leaves
Under which the bright sea heaves;
While each breathless interval
In their whisperings musical
The inspired soul supplies
With its own deep melodies,
And the love which heals all strife
Circling, like the breath of life,
All things in that sweet abode
With its own mild brotherhood.
They, not it would change; and soon
Every sprite beneath the moon
Would repent its envy vain,
And the earth grow young again.

SUPERSTITION.

Thou taintest all thou look'st upon! The stars,
Which on thy cradle beam'd so brightly sweet,
Were gods to the distemper'd playfulness
Of thy untutor'd infancy; the trees,
The grass, the clouds, the mountains, and the sea,
All living things that walk, swim, creep, or fly,
Were gods: the sun had homage, and the moon
Her worshiper. Then thou becamest, a boy,
More daring in thy frenzies: every shape,
Monstrous or vast, or beautifully wild,
Which, from sensation's relics, fancy culls;
The spirits of the air, the shuddering ghost,
The genii of the elements, the powers
That give a shape to nature's varied works,
Had life and place in the corrupt belief
Of thy blind heart: yet still thy youthful hands
Were pure of human blood. Then manhood gave
Its strength and ardour to thy frenzied brain;
Thine eager gaze scann'd the stupendous scene,
Whose wonders mock'd the knowledge of thy pride:
Their everlasting and unchanging laws
Reproach'd thine ignorance. Awhile thou stoodest
Baffled and gloomy; then thou didst sum up
The elements of all that thou didst know;
The changing seasons, winter's leafless reign,
The budding of the heaven-breathing trees,
The eternal orbs that beautify the night,
The sun-rise, and the setting of the moon,
Earthquakes and wars, and poisons and disease,
And all their causes, to an abstract point

Converging, thou didst give it name, and form,
Intelligence, and unity, and power.

OH! THERE ARE SPIRITS.

ΔΑΚΡΥΕΙ ΔΙΟΙΣΩ ΠΟΤΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΤΜΟΝ.

Oh! there are spirits in the air,
And genii of the evening breeze,
And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair
As star-beams among twilight trees:—
Such lovely ministers to meet
Oft hast thou turn'd from men thy lonely feet.

With mountain winds, and babbling springs,
And mountain seas, that are the voice
Of these inexplicable things,
Thou didst hold commune, and rejoice
When they did answer thee; but they
Cast, like a worthless boon, thy love away.

And thou hast sought in starry eyes
Beams that were never meant for thine,
Another's wealth;—tame sacrifice
To a fond faith! still dost thou pine?
Still dost thou hope that greeting hands,
Voice, looks, or lips, may answer thy demands?

Ah! wherefore didst thou build thine hope
On the false earth's inconstancy?
Did thine own mind afford no scope
Of love, or moving thoughts to thee?

That natural scenes or human smiles
Could steal the power to wind thee in their wiles.

Yes, all the faithless smiles are fled
Whose falsehood left thee broken-hearted;
The glory of the moon is dead;
Night's ghost and dreams have now departed;
Thine own soul still is true to thee,
But changed to a foul fiend through misery.

This fiend, whose ghastily presence ever
Beside thee like thy shadow hangs,
Dream not to chase;—the mad endeavour
Would scourge thee to severer pangs.
Be as thou art. Thy settled fate,
Dark as it is, all change would aggravate.

STANZA.—APRIL, 1814.

Away! the moor is dark beneath the moon,
Rapid clouds have drunk the last pale beam of even:
Away! the gathering winds will call the darkness soon,
And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights of heaven.
Pause not! The time is past! Every voice cries, Away!
Tempt not with one last glance thy friend's ungentle mood:
Thy lover's eye, so glazed and cold, dares not entreat thy stay:
Duty and dereliction guide thee back to solitude.

Away, away! to thy sad and silent home;
Pour bitter tears on its desolated hearth;
Watch the dim shades as like ghosts they go and come,
And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth.
The leaves of wasted autumn woods shall float around thine head;
The blooms of dewy spring shall gleam beneath thy feet:
But thy soul or this world must fade in the frost that binds the dead,
Ere midnight's frown and morning's smile, ere thou and peace may meet.

The cloud shadows of midnight possess their own repose,
For the weary winds are silent, or the moon is in the deep;
Some respite to its turbulence unresting ocean knows:
Whatever moves, or toils, or grieves, hath its appointed sleep.
Thou in the grave shalt rest—yet till the phantoms flee
Which that house and heath and garden made dear to thee erewhile,
Thy remembrance, and repentance, and deep musings, are not free
From the music of two voices, and the light of one sweet smile.

MUTABILITY.

We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon;
How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,
Streaking the darkness radiantly!—yet soon
Night closes round, and they are lost for ever:

Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings
Give various response to each varying blast,
To whose frail frame no second motion brings
One mood or modulation like the last.

We rest—A dream has power to poison sleep;
We rise—One wandering thought pollutes the day:
We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep;
Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away:

It is the same!—For, be it joy or sorrow,
The path of its departure still is free:
Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
Nought may endure but Mutability.

ON DEATH.

There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.—Ecclesiastes.

The pale, the cold, and the moony smile,
Which the meteor beam of a starless night
Sheds on a lonely and sea-girt isle,
Ere the dawning of morn's undoubted light,
Is the flame of life so fickle and wan
That flits round our steps till their strength is gone.

O man! hold thee on in courage of soul
Through the stormy shades of thy worldly way,
And the billows of cloud that around thee roll
Shall sleep in the light of a wondrous day,
Where hell and heaven shall leave thee free
To the universe of destiny.

This world is the nurse of all we know,
  This world is the mother of all we feel,
And the coming of death is a fearful blow
  To a brain unencompass'd with nerves of steel;
When all that we know, or feel, or see,
Shall pass like an unreal mystery.

The secret things of the grave are there,
  Where all but this frame must surely be,
Though the fine-wrought eye and the wondrous ear
  No longer will live, to hear or to see
All that is great and all that is strange
In the boundless realm of unending change.

Who telleth a tale of unspeaking death?
  Who lifteth the veil of what is to come?
Who painteth the shadows that are beneath
  The wide-winding caves of the peopled tomb?
Or uniteth the hopes of what shall be
With the fears and the love for that which we see?

A SUMMER-EVENING CHURCH-YARD, LECHDALE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

The wind has swept from the wide atmosphere
  Each vapour that obscured the sun-set's ray,
And palid evening twines its beamy hair
  In duskier braids around the languid eyes of day:
Silence and twilight, unbeloved of men,
Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day,
Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea;
Light, sound, and motion, own the potent sway,
Responding to the charm with its own mystery.
The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass
Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, aërial pile! whose pinnacles
Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,
Obeyest in silence their sweet solemn spells,
Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and distant spire,
Around whose lessening and invisible height
Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres:
And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound,
Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,
Breathed from their wormy beds all living things around,
And, mingling with the still night and mute sky,
Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnized and soften'd, death is mild
And terrorless as this serenest night:
Here could I hope, like some inquiring child
Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human sight
Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep
That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep.

LINES

WRITTEN ON HEARING THE NEWS OF THE DEATH OF NAPOLEON.

What! alive and so bold, O Earth?
Art thou not over-bold?
What! leapest thou forth as of old
In the light of thy morning mirth,
The last of the flock of the starry fold?
Ha! leapest thou forth as of old?
Are not the limbs still when the ghost is fled,
And canst thou more, Napoleon being dead?

How! is not thy quick heart cold?
What spark is alive on thy hearth?
How! is not *his* death-knell knoll'd?
And livest *thou* still, mother Earth?
Thou wert warming thy fingers old
O'er the embers cover'd and cold
Of that most fiery spirit, when it fled—
What, mother, do you laugh now he is dead?

"Who has known me of old," replied Earth,
"Or who has my story told?
It is thou who art over-bold."
And the lightning of scorn laugh'd forth
As she sung, "To my bosom I fold
All my sons when their knell is knoll'd,
And so with living motion all are fed,
And the quick spring like weeds out of the dead."

"Still alive and still bold," shouted Earth,
"I grow bolder, and still more bold.

The dead fill me ten thousand fold
Fuller of speed, and splendour, and mirth;
I was cloudy, and sullen, and cold,
Like a frozen chaos uproll'd,
Till by the spirit of the mighty dead
My heart grew warm. I feed on whom I fed."

"Ay, alive and bold," mutter'd Earth,
"Napoleon's fierce spirit roll'd,
In terror, and blood, and gold,
A torrent of ruin to death from his birth.
Leave the millions who follow to mould
The metal before it be cold,
And weave into his shame, which like the dead
Shrouds me, the hopes that from his glory fled."

SUMMER AND WINTER.

It was a bright and cheerful afternoon,
Towards the end of the sunny month of June,
When the north wind congregates in crowds
The floating mountains of the silver clouds
From the horizon—and the stainless sky
Opens beyond them like eternity.
All things rejoiced beneath th' sun, the weeds,
The river, and the corn-fields, and the reeds;
The willow leaves that glanced in the light breeze,
And the firm foliage of the larger trees.

It was a winter such as when birds do die
In the deep forests; and the fishes lie

Stiffen'd in the translucent ice, which makes
Even the mud and slime of the warm lakes
A wrinkled clod, as hard as brick; and when,
Among their children, comfortable men
Gather about great fires, and yet feel cold:
Alas! then for the homeless beggar old!

THE TOWER OF FAMINE.*

Amid the desolation of a city,
Which was the cradle, and is now the grave
Of an extinguish'd people, so that pity
Weeps o'er the shipwrecks of oblivion's wave,
There stands the Tower of Famine. It is built
Upon some prison-homes, whose dwellers rave
For bread, and gold, and blood: pain, link'd to guilt,
Agitates the light flame of their hours,
Until its vital oil is spent or spilt:
There stands the pile, a tower amid the towers
And sacred domes; each marble-ribbed roof,
The brazen-gated temples, and the bowers
Of solitary wealth! The tempest-proof
Pavilions of the dark Italian air
Are by its presence dimm'd—they stand aloof,
And are withdrawn—so that the world is bare,
As if a spectre, wrapt in shapeless terror,
Amid a company of ladies fair

* At Pisa there still exists the prison of Ugolino, which goes by the name of 'La Torre della Fame:' in the adjoining building the galley-slaves are confined. It is situated near the Ponte al Mare, on the Arno.

Should glide and glow, till it became a mirror
Of all their beauty, and their hair and hue,
The life of their sweet eyes, with all its error,
Should be absorb'd till they to marble grew.

THE AZIOLA.

"Do you not hear the Aziola cry?
Methinks she must be nigh,"
Said Mary, as we sate
In dusk, ere the stars were lit, or candles brought;
And I, who thought
This Aziola was some tedious woman,
Ask'd, "Who is Aziola?" How elate
I felt to know that it was nothing human,
No mockery of myself to fear or hate!
And Mary saw my soul,
And laugh'd and said, "Disquiet yourself not,
'Tis nothing but a little downy owl."

Sad Aziola! many an eventide
Thy music I had heard
By wood and stream, meadow and mountain side,
And fields and marshes wide,—
Such as nor voice, nor lute, nor wind, nor bird,
The soul ever stirr'd;
Unlike and far sweeter than them all:
Sad Aziola! from that moment I
Loved thee and thy sad cry.

TO WORDSWORTH.

Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know
That things depart which never may return!
Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,
Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.
These common woes I feel. One loss is mine,
Which thou too feel'st; yet I alone deplore.
Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine
On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar:
Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood
Above the blind and battling multitude.
In honour'd poverty thy voice did weave
Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,—
Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,
Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

FEELINGS OF A REPUBLICAN ON THE FALL OF BONAPARTE.

I hated thee, fallen tyrant! I did groan
To think that a most ambitious slave,
Like thou, shouldst dance and revel on the grave
Of Liberty. Thou mightst have built thy throne
Where it had stood even now: thou didst prefer
A frail and bloody pomp, which time has swept
In fragments towards oblivion. Massacre,
For this I pray'd, would on thy sleep have crept,
Treason and Slavery, Rapine, Fear, and Lust,
And stifled thee, their minister. I know
Too late, since thou and France are in the dust,

That Virtue owns a more eternal foe
Than force or fraud: old Custom, legal Crime,
And bloody Faith, the foulest birth of time.

DANTE ALIGHIERI TO GUIDO CAVALCANTI.

From the Italian of Dante.

Guido, I would that Lappo, thou, and I,
Led by some strong enchantment, might ascend
A magic ship, whose charmed sails should fly,
With winds at will, where'er our thoughts might wend,
And that no change, nor any evil chance,
Should mar our joyous voyage; but it might be,
That even satiety should still enhance
Between our hearts their strict community,
And that the bounteous wizard then would place
Vanna and Bice and my gentle love,
Companions of our wandering, and would grace
With passionate talk, wherever we might rove,
Our time, and each were as content and free
As I believe that thou and I should be.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF MOSCHUS.

Ταν ἁλα ταν γλαυκαν ὁταν ὠνεμος ατρεμαβαλλῃ,
κ. τ. λ.

When winds that move not its calm surface sweep
The azure sea, I love the land no more:
The smiles of the serene and tranquil deep
Tempt my unquiet mind.—But when the roar

Of ocean's grey abyss resounds, and foam
Gathers upon the sea, and vast waves burst,
I turn from the drear aspect to the home
Of earth and its deep woods, where, interspersed,
When winds blow loud, pines make sweet melody;
Whose house is some lone bark, whose toil the sea,
Whose prey, the wandering fish, an evil lot
Has chosen.—But I my languid limbs will fling
Beneath the plane, where the brook's murmuring
Moves the calm spirit, but disturbs it not.

ODE TO LIBERTY.

Yet, Freedom, yet thy banner, torn but flying,
Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind. *Byron.*

A GLORIOUS people vibrated again
The lightning of the nations: Liberty
From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,
Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
Gleam'd. My soul spurn'd the chains of its dismay,
And, in the rapid plumes of song,
Clothed itself, sublime and strong,
As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among,
Hovering in verse o'er its accustom'd prey;
Till from its station in the heaven of fame
The Spirit's whirlwind rapt it, and the ray
Of the remotest sphere of living flame
Which paves the void was from behind it flung,
As foam from a ship's swiftness, when there came
A voice out of the deep: I will record the same.

The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth:
The burning stars of the abyss were hurl'd
Into the depths of heaven. The dædal earth,
That island in the ocean of the world,
Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air:
But this divinest universe
Was yet a chaos and a curse,
For thou wert not: but power from worst producing worse,
The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
And of the birds, and of the watery forms,
And there was war among them, and despair
Within them, raging without truce or terms:
The bosom of their violated nurse
Groan'd, for beasts warr'd on beasts, and worms on worms,
And men on men; each heart was as a hell of storms.

Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied
His generations under the pavilion
Of the Sun's throne: palace and pyramid,
Temple and prison, to many a swarming million
Were as to mountain-wolves their ragged caves.
This human living multitude
Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,
For thou wert not; but o'er the populous solitude,
Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves,
Hung tyranny; beneath, sate deified
The sister-pest, congregator of slaves;
Into the shadow of her pinions wide,
Anarchs and priests who feed on gold and blood,
Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed,
Drove the astonish'd herds of men from every side.

The nodding promontories, and blue isles,
And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves

Of Greece, bask'd glorious in the open smiles
Of favouring heaven: from their enchanted caves
Prophetic echoes flung dim melody
On the unapprehensive wild.
The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled;
And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,
Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain,
Like aught that is which wraps what is to be,
Art's deathless dreams lay veil'd by many a vein
Of Parian stone; and, yet a speechless child,
Verse murmur'd, and Philosophy did strain
Her lidless eyes for thee; when o'er the Ægean main

Athens arose: a city such as vision
Builds from the purple crags and silver towers
Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
Of kingliest masonry: the ocean-floors
Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it;
Its portals are inhabited
By thunder-zoned winds, each head
Within its cloudy wings with sun-fire garlanded,
A divine work! Athens diviner yet
Gleam'd with its crest of columns, on the will
Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set;
For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill
Peopled with forms that mock the eternal dead
In marble immortality, that hill
Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle.

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay
Immovably unquiet, and for ever
It trembles, but it cannot pass away!

The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
With an earth-awakening blast
Through the caverns of the past;
Religion veils her eyes; Oppression shrinks aghast:
A winged sound of joy, and love, and wonder,
Which soars where Expectation never flew,
Rending the veil of space and time asunder!
One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew;
One sun illumines heaven; one spirit vast
With life and love makes chaos ever new,
As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew.

Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom fairest,
Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmæan Mænad,*
She drew the milk of greatness, though thy dearest
From that Elysian food was yet unwean'd;
And many a deed of terrible uprightness
By thy sweet love was sanctified;
And in thy smile, and by thy side,
Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius died.
But when tears stain'd thy robe of vestal whiteness,
And gold prophaned thy capitolian throne,
Thou didst desert, with spirit-winged lightness,
The senate of the tyrants: they sunk prone
Slaves of one tyrant: Palatinus sigh'd
Faint echoes of Ionian song; that tone
Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to disown.

From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill,
Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,
Or utmost islet inaccessible,
Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,

* See the Bacchæ of Euripides.

Teaching the woods and waves, and desert rocks,
And every Naiad's ice-cold urn,
To talk in echoes sad and stern,
Of that sublimest lore which man had dared unlearn?
For neither didst thou watch the wizard flocks
Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the Druid's sleep.
What if the tears rain'd through thy shatter'd locks
Were quickly dried? for thou didst groan, not weep,
When from its sea of death, to kill and burn,
The Galilean serpent forth did creep,
And made thy world an undistinguishable heap.

A thousand years the Earth cried, Where art thou?
And then the shadow of thy coming fell
On Saxon Alfred's olive-cinctured brow:
And many a warrior-peopled citadel,
Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat deep,
Arose in sacred Italy,
Frowning o'er the tempestuous sea
Of kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-crown'd majesty;
That multitudinous anarchy did sweep,
And burst around their walls, like idle foam,
Whilst from the human spirit's deepest deep,
Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb
Dissonant arms; and Art, which cannot die,
With divine wand traced on our earthly home
Fit imagery to pave heaven's everlasting dome.

Thou huntress swifter than the Moon! thou terror
Of the world's wolves! thou bearer of the quiver,
Whose sunlike shafts pierce tempest-winged Error,
As light may pierce the clouds when they dissever
In the calm regions of the orient day!

Luther caught thy wakening glance:
Like lightning, from his leaden lance
Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance
In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay;
And England's prophets hailed thee as their queen,
In songs whose music cannot pass away,
Though it must flow for ever: not unseen
Before the spirit-sighted countenance
Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene
Beyond whose night he saw, with a dejected mien.

The eager hours and unreluctant years
As on a dawn-illumined mountain stood,
Trampling to silence their loud hopes and fears,
Darkening each other with their multitude,
And cried aloud, Liberty! Indignation
Answered Pity from her cave;
Death grew pale within the grave,
And Desolation howled to the destroyer, Save!
When like heaven's sun, girt by the exhalation
Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise,
Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation
Like shadows: as if day had cloven the skies
At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,
Men started, staggering with a glad surprise
Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar eyes.

Thou heaven of earth! what spells could pall thee, then
In ominous eclipse? A thousand years,
Bred from the slime of deep oppression's den,
Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears,
Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain away;
How like Bacchanals of blood
Round France, the ghastly vintage, stood

Destruction's sceptred slaves, and Folly's mitred brood!
When one, like them, but mightier far than they,
The Anarch of thine own bewildered powers,
Rose: armies mingled in obscure array,
Like clouds with clouds, darkening the sacred bowers
Of serene heaven. He, by the past pursued,
Rests with those dead but unforgotten hours
Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their ancestral towers.

England yet sleeps: was she not called of old?
Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder
Vesuvius wakens Ætna, and the cold
Snow-crags by its reply are cloven in sunder:
O'er the lit waves every Æolian isle
From Pithecusa to Pelorus
Howls, and leaps, and glares, in chorus:
They cry, Be dim; ye lamps of heaven suspended o'er us.
Her chains are threads of gold; she need but smile
And they dissolve; but Spain's were links of steel,
Till bit to dust by virtue's keenest file.
Twins of a single destiny! appeal
To the eternal years enthroned before us
In the dim West; impress us from a seal,
All ye have thought and done! Time cannot dare conceal.

Tomb of Arminius! render up thy dead,
Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's staff,
His soul may stream over the tyrant's head;
Thy victory shall be his epitaph,
Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine,
King-deluded Germany,
His dead spirit lives in thee.
Why do we fear or hope? thou art already free!

And thou, lost Paradise of this divine
And glorious world! thou flowery wilderness!
Thou island of eternity! thou shrine
Where desolation, clothed with loveliness,
Worships the thing thou wert! O Italy,
Gather thy blood into thy heart; repress
The beasts who make their dens thy sacred palaces.

Oh that the free would stamp the impious name
Of **** into the dust! or write it there,
So that this blot upon the page of fame
Were as a serpent's path, which the light air
Erases, and the flat sands close behind!
Ye the oracle have heard:
Lift the victory-flashing sword,
And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word,
Which, weak itself as stubble, yet can bind
Into a mass, irrefragably firm,
The axes and the rods which awe mankind.
The sound has poison in it; 'tis the sperm
Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and abhorred.
Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term,
To set thine armed heel on this reluctant worm.

Oh that the wise from their bright minds would kindle
Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,
That the pale name of Priest might shrink and dwindle
Into the hell from which it first was hurled,
A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure;
Till human thoughts might kneel alone
Each before the judgement throne
Of its own aweless soul, or of the power unknown!
Oh that the words which make the thoughts obscure
From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering dew

From a white lake blot heaven's blue portraiture,
Were stript of their thin masks and various hue,
And frowns and smiles and splendors not their own,
Till in the nakedness of false and true
They stand before their Lord, each to receive its due.

He, who taught man to vanquish whatsoever
Can be between the cradle and the grave,
Crown'd him the King of Life. O vain endeavour!
If on his own high will a willing slave,
He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor.
What if earth can clothe and feed
Amplest millions at their need,
And power in thought be as the tree within the seed;
Or what if Art, an ardent intercessor,
Diving on fiery wings to Nature's throne,
Checks the great mother stooping to caress her,
And cries: Give me, thy child, dominion
Over all height and depth? if Life can breed
New wants and wealth from those who toil and groan,
Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousand fold for one.

Come, Thou, but lead out of the inmost cave
Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-star
Beckons the Sun from the Eoan wave,
Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car
Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame;
Comes she not, and come ye not,
Rulers of eternal thought,
To judge, with solemn truth, life's ill-apportion'd lot?
Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame
Of what has been, the Hope of what will be?
O Liberty! if such could be thy name,
Wert thou disjoin'd from these, or they from thee?

If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought
By blood or tears, have not the wise and free
Wept tears, and blood like tears? The solemn harmony

Paused, and the spirit of that mighty singing
To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn;
Then, as a wild swan, when sublimely winging
Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of dawn,
Sinks headlong through the aerial golden light
On the heavy sounding plain,
When the bolt has pierced its brain;
As summer clouds dissolve, unburthen'd of their rain;
As a far taper fades with fading night,
As a brief insect dies with dying day,
My song, its pinnions disarrayed of might,
Droop'd; o'er it closed the echoes far away
Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,
As waves which lately paved his watery way
Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play.

STANZAS

TO * * * *

The serpent is shut out from paradise.
The wounded deer must seek the herb no more
In which its heart-cure lies:
The widowed dove must cease to haunt a bower,
Like that from which its mate with feigned sighs
Fled in the April hour.
I too must seldom seek again
Near happy friends a mitigated pain.

Of hatred I am proud,—with scorn content;
Indifference, that once hurt me, now is grown
Itself indifferent.
But, not to speak of love, pity alone
Can break a spirit already more than bent.
The miserable one
Turns the mind's poison into food,—
Its medicine is tears,—its evil good.

Therefore if now I see you seldomer,
Dear, gentle friend! know that I only fly
Your looks, because they stir
Griefs that should sleep, and hopes that cannot die:
The very comfort that they minister
I scarce can bear, yet I,
So deeply is the arrow gone,
Should quickly perish if it were withdrawn.

When I return to my cold home, you ask
Why I am not as I have ever been.
You spoil me for the task
Of acting a forced part on life's dull scene,—
Of wearing on my brow the idle mask
Of author, great or mean.
In the world's Carnival I sought
Peace thus, and but in you I found it not.

Full half an hour, to-day, I tried my lot
With various flowers, and every one still said,
"She loves me——loves me not."*
And if this meant a vision long since fled—
If it meant fortune, fame, or peace of thought—
If it meant,—but I dread
To speak what you may know too well:
Still there was truth in the sad oracle.

* See *Faust*.

The crane o'er seas and forests seeks her home;
No bird so wild but has its quiet nest,
Whence it no more would roam;
The sleepless billows on the ocean's breast
Burst like a bursting heart, and die in peace,
And thus at length find rest.
Doubtless there is a place of peace
Where my weak heart and all its throbs shall cease.

I asked her, yesterday, if she believed
That I had resolution. One who had
Would ne'er have thus relieved
His heart with words,—but what his judgment bade
Would do, and leave the scorner unreprieved.
These verses are too sad
To send to you, but that I know,
Happy yourself, you feel another's woe.

END OF THE MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

ADONAIS,

AN ELEGY

ON THE

DEATH OF JOHN KEATS.

BY

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

Ἀστηρ πρὶν μὲν ἐλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν ἑῳος.
Νῦν δὲ θανὼν λάμπεις ἕσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις. PLATO.

LONDON:

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1834.

PREFACE.

φάρμακον ἦλθε, Βίων, ποτὶ σὸν στόμα, φάρμακον εἶδες·
Πῶς τευ τοῖς χείλεσσι ποτέδραμε, κοὐκ ἐγλυκάνθη;
Τίς δὲ βροτὸς τοσσοῦτον ἀνάμερος, ἢ κεράσαι τοι,
Ἢ δοῦναι λαλέοντι τὸ φάρμακον; ἔκφυγεν ᾠδάν.

MOSCHUS, *Epitaph. Bion.*

It is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object, to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier composition were modelled, prove at least that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of Hyperion as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats died at Rome of a consumption in his twenty-fourth year, on the ——— of ——— 1821; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies.

It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where canker-worms abound, what wonder if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his Endymion, which appeared in the Quarterly Review, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgments from more candid critics of the true greatness of his powers were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows, or one, like Keats's, composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to "Endymion," was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated with various degrees of complacency and panegyric, "Paris," and "Woman," and a "Syrian Tale," and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men, who, in their venal good nature, presumed to draw a parallel between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What gnat did they strain at here, after having swallowed all those

camels? Against what woman taken in adultery dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse, that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the Elegy was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of Endymion, was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits. The poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life, no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius, than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome, and attended in his illness, by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, "almost risked his own life and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend." Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from "such stuff as dreams are made of." His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career.—May the unextin-

guished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!

written in Italy Autumn 1818-2

ADONAIS;

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS.

I WEEP for ADONAIS—he is dead!
Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
And teach them thine own sorrow; say—with me
Died Adonais!—till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity!

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,
When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
In darkness? where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,
'Mid list'ning Echoes, in her Paradise
She sate, while one, with soft enamour'd breath,
Rekindled all the fading melodies,
With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
He had adorn'd and hid the coming bulk of death.

Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead!
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep,
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;

For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
Descend:—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
Will yet restore him to the vital air;
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

Most musical of mourners, weep again!
Lament anew, Urania!—He died,
Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride.
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
Trampled and mock'd with many a loathed rite
Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
Into the gulph of death; but his clear sprite
Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light.

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Not all to that bright station dared to climb;
And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
In which suns perished; others more sublime,
Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode.

But now, thy youngest dearest one has perish'd,
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherish'd,
And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom, whose petals nipt before they blew
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

To that high Capital, where kingly Death
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal.—Come away!
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

He will awake no more, oh, never more!—
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
The shadow of white Death, and at the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface
So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law
Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

Oh, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,
The passion-winged Ministers of thought,
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
The love which was its music, wander not,—
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot
Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
They ne'er will gather strength, nor find a home again.

And one with trembling hand clasps his cold head,
And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries,
"Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;

See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
A tear some Dream has loosen'd from his brain,"
Lost Angel of a ruin'd Paradise
She knew not 'twas her own; as with no stain
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Wash'd his light limbs, as if embalming them;
Another clipt her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem;
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and winged reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more weak;
And dull the barbed fire against his frozen cheek.

Another Splendor on his mouth alit,
That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart beneath
With lightning and with music: the damp death
Quench'd its caress upon his icy lips;
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,
It flush'd through his pale limbs, and pass'd to its eclipse.

And others came,—Desires and Adorations,
Winged Persuasions and veil'd Destinies,
Splendors, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies;
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,

Came in slow pomp;—the moving pomp might seem
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

All he had loved, and moulded into thought,
From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,
Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
Dimm'd the aerial eyes that kindle day;
Afar the melancholy thunder moan'd,
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild winds flew around, sobbing in their dismay.

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
And feeds her grief with his remember'd lay,
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
Or amorous birds perch'd on the young green spray,
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
Than those for whose disdain they pined away
Into a shadow of all sounds:—a drear
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,
For whom should she have waked the sullen year?
To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear,
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou Adonais: wan they stand and sere
Amid the drooping comrades of their youth,
With dew all turn'd to tears; odour, to sighing ruth.

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain;
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,
As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

Ah woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year;
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows, re-appear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Season's bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brere,
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,
Like unimprison'd flames, out of their trance awake.

Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean,
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst,
As it has ever done, with change and motion,
From the great morning of the world when first
God dawn'd on Chaos; in its stream immersed,
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;
Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight
The beauty and the joy of their renewed might.

The leprous corpse, touch'd by this spirit tender,
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendor

Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death,
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;
Nought we know dies. Shall that alone which knows
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
By sightless lightning ?—th' intense atom glows
A moment, then is quench'd in a most cold repose.

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene
The actors or spectators? Great and mean
Meet mass'd in death, who lends what life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.

He will awake no more, oh, never more!
"Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless Mother, rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,
A wound more fierce than his tears and sighs."
And all the Dreams that watch'd Urania's eyes,
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
Had held in holy silence, cried: "Arise!"
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendor sprung.

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
Has left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear
So struck, so roused, so rapt, Urania;
So sadden'd round her like an atmosphere

Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way,
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,
And human hearts, which to her aery thread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell:
And barbed tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
Blush'd to annihilation, and the breath
Revisited those lips, and life's pale light
Flash'd through those limbs, so late her dear delight.
"Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
Leave me not!" cried Urania: her distress
Rouzed Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress.

"Stay yet a while! speak to me once again;
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
And in my heartless breast and burning brain
That word, that kiss shall all thoughts else survive,
With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chain'd to Time, and cannot thence depart!

"O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
Defenceless as thou wert, oh! where was then
Wisdom the mirror'd shield, or scorn the spear?
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
Thy spirit should have fill'd its crescent sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

"The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;
The vultures, to the conqueror's banner true,
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
And whose wings rain contagion;—how they fled,
When, like Apollo, from his golden bow,
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second blow,
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them as they go.

"The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gather'd into death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again;
So it is in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimm'd or shared its light
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night."

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles re ;
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame

Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
In sorrow; for her wilds Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And love taught grief to fall like music from his tongue.

'Midst others of less note came one frail Form,
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm,
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

A pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift—
A Love in desolation masked;— a Power
Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow;—even whilst we speak
Is it not broken? On the withering flower
The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

His head was bound with pansies over-blown,
And faided violets, white, and pied, and blue;
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasp'd it; of that crew

He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandon'd deer, struck by the hunter's dart.

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band
Who in another's fate now wept his own;
As in the accents of an unknown land
He sang new sorrow; sad Urania scann'd
The Stranger's mien, and murmur'd: "Who art thou?"
He answer'd not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
Which was like Cain's or Christ's.—Oh! that it should be so!

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
In mockery of monumental stone,
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honour'd the departed one;
Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh!
What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
The nameless worm would now itself disown:
It felt, yet could escape the magic tone
Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
But what was howling in one breast alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre's unstrung.

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
Thou noteless blot on a remember'd name!
But to thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at thy season be thou free
To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow:
Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;
Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now.

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
Far from these carrion-kites that scream below;
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.—
Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
He hath awaken'd from the dream of life—
'T is we, who, lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance strike with our spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings—*We* decay
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

He has out outsoar'd the shadow of our night;
Envy and calumny, and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,

Can touch him not and torture not again;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

He lives, he wakes—'t is Death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendor, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
Cease ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
O'er the abandon'd Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder to the song of night's sweet bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear;
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;

And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

The splendors of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguish'd not;
Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it, for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there,
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

The inheritors of unfulfill'd renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale, his solemn agony had not
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell, and as he lived and loved,
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

And many more, whose names on earth are dark,
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
"Thou art become as one of us," they cry;
"It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid a Heaven of Song.
Assume thy winged throne, thou Vesper of our throng!"

Who mourns for Adonais? oh come forth,
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
Satiate the void circumference: then shrink
Even to a point within our day and night;
And keep thy heart light, lest it make thee sink
When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought
That ages, empires, and religions, there
Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;
For such as he can lend,—they borrow not
Glory from those who made the world their prey;
And he is gather'd to the kings of thought
Who waged contention with their time's decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
And where its wrecks like shatter'd mountains rise,
And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress
The bones of Desolation's nakedness,
Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access,
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread,

And grey walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,

Pavilioning the dust of him who plann'd
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transform'd to marble ; and beneath
A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitch'd in Heaven's smile their camp of death.
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguish'd breath.

Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which consign'd
Its charge to each ; and if the seal is set,
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

The One remains, the many change and pass ;
Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly ;
Life, like a dome of many-colour'd glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek !
Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?
Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here
They have departed ; thou shouldst now depart!
A light is passed from the revolving year,
And man, and woman; and what still is dear
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers near:

'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten hither,
No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which, through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
The massy earth and sphered skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

END OF ADONAIS.

PREFACE.

THE poem of Hellas, written at the suggestion of the events of the moment, is a mere improvise, and derives its interest (should it be found to possess any) solely from the intense sympathy which the Author feels with the cause he would celebrate.

The subject in its present state is insusceptible of being treated otherwise than lyrically, and if I have called this poem a drama from the circumstance of its being composed in dialogue, the licence is not greater than that which has been assumed by other poets, who have called their productions epics, only because they have been divided into twelve or twenty-four books.

The Persæ of Æschylus afforded me the first model of my conception, although the decision of the glorious contest now waging in Greece being yet suspended, forbids a catastrophe parallel to the return of Xerxes and the desolation of the Persians. I have, therefore, contented myself with exhibiting a series of lyric pictures, and with having wrought upon the curtain of futurity, which falls on the unfinished scene, such figures of indistinct and visionary delineation as suggest the final triumph

of the Greek cause as a portion of the cause of civilization and social improvement.

The drama (if drama it must be called) is, however, so inartificial, that I doubt whether, if recited on the Thespian waggon to an Athenian village at the Dionysiaca, it would have obtained the prize of the goat. I shall bear with equanimity any punishment greater than the loss of such a reward which the Aristarchi of the hour may think fit to inflict.

The only goat-song which I have yet attempted has, I confess, in spite of the unfavourable nature of the subject, received a greater and a more valuable portion of applause than I expected, or than it deserved.

Common fame is the only authority which I can allege for the details which form the basis of the poem, and I must trespass upon the forgiveness of my readers for the display of newspaper erudition to which I have been reduced. Undoubtedly, until the conclusion of the war, it will be impossible to obtain an account of it sufficiently authentic for historical materials; but poets have their privilege, and it is unquestionable that actions of the most exalted courage have been performed by the Greeks—they have gained more than one naval victory, and that their defeat in Wallachia was signalized by circumstances of heroism more glorious even than victory.

The apathy of the rulers of the civilized world, to the astonishing circumstance of the descendants of that nation to which they owe their civilization—rising as it

were from the ashes of their ruin, is something perfectly inexplicable to a mere spectator of the shows of this mortal scene. We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their root in Greece. But for Greece, Rome, the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages and idolaters; or, what is worse, might have arrived at such a stagnant and miserable state of social institution as China and Japan possess.

The human form and the human mind attained to a perfection in Greece which has impressed its image on those faultless productions whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and has propagated impulses which cannot cease, through a thousand channels of manifest or imperceptible operation, to ennoble and delight mankind until the extinction of the race.

The modern Greek is the descendant of those glorious beings whom the imagination almost refuses to figure to itself as belonging to our kind; and he inherits much of their sensibility, their rapidity of conception, their enthusiasm, and their courage. If in many instances he is degraded by moral and political slavery to the practice of the basest vices it engenders, and that below the level of ordinary degradation, let us reflect that the corruption of the best produces the worst, and that habits which subsist only in relation to a peculiar state of social institution may be expected to cease as soon as that relation is dissolved. In fact, the Greeks, since

the admirable novel of "Anastatius" could have been a faithful picture of their manners, have undergone most important changes; the flower of their youth, returning to their country from the universities of Italy, Germany, and France, have communicated to their fellow-citizens the latest results of that social perfection of which their ancestors were the original source. The university of Chios contained before the breaking out of the revolution eight hundred students, and among them several Germans and Americans. The munificence and energy of many of the Greek Princes and merchants, directed to the renovation of their country with a spirit and a wisdom which has few examples, is above all praise.

The English permit their own oppressors to act according to their natural sympathy with the Turkish tyrant, and to brand upon their name the indelible blot of an alliance with the enemies of domestic happiness, of Christianity, and civilization.

Russsia, desires to possess, not to liberate, Greece; and is contented to see the Turks, its natural enemies, and the Greeks, its intended slaves, enfeeble each other, until one or both fall into its net. The wise and generous policy of England would have consisted in establishing the independence of Greece and in maintaining it both against Russia and the Turk;—but when was the oppressor generous or just?

The Spanish Peninsula is already free. France is tranquil in the enjoyment of a partial exemption from the abuses which its unnatural and enfeebled government are

vainly attempting to revive. The seed of blood and misery has been sown in Italy, and a more vigorous race is arising to go forth to the harvest. The world waits only the news of a revolution of Germany, to see the tyrants who have pinnacled themselves on its supineness precipitated into the ruin from which they shall never arise. Well do these destroyers of mankind know their enemy, when they impute the insurrection in Greece to the same spirit before which they tremble throughout the rest of Europe; and that enemy well knows the power and cunning of its opponents, and watches the moment of their approaching weakness and inevitable division, to wrest the bloody sceptres from their grasp.

HELLAS;

A LYRICAL DRAMA.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MAHMUD.
HASSAN.
DAOOD.
AHASUERUS, *a Jew.*

Chorus of Greek captive Women.
Messengers, Slaves, and Attendants.

SCENE,—*Constantinople.* TIME,—*Sunset.*

SCENE.—*A Terrace on the Seraglio.*

MAHMUD (*sleeping,*) *an Indian Slave sitting beside his Couch.*

Chorus of Greek captive Women.

WE strew these opiate flowers
On thy restless pillow,—
They were stript from Orient bowers
By the Indian billow.
Be thy sleep
Calm and deep,
Like theirs who fell—not ours who weep!

Indian. Away, unlovely dreams!
Away, false shapes of sleep:
Be his, as heaven seems,
Clear, bright, and deep!
Soft as love and calm as death,
Sweet as a summer-night without a breath.

Chorus. Sleep, sleep! our song is laden
With the soul of slumber;
It was sung by a Samian maiden
Whose lover was of the number
Who now keep
That calm sleep
Whence none may wake, where none shall weep.

Indian. I touch thy temples pale!
I breathe my soul on thee!
And, could my prayers avail,
All my joy should be
Dead, and I would live to weep,
So thou mightst win one hour of quiet sleep.

Chorus. Breathe low, low,
The spell of the mighty mistress now!
When conscience lulls her sated snake,
And Tyrants sleep, let Freedom wake.
Breathe low, low,
The words which, like secret fire, shall flow
Through the veins of the frozen earth—low, low!

Semicho. I. Life may change, but it may fly not;
Hope may vanish, but can die not;
Truth be veiled, but still it burneth;
Love repulsed,—but it returneth!

Semicho. II. Yet were life a charnel, where
Hope lay coffin'd with despair;
Yet were truth a sacred lie,
Love were lust—

Semicho. I. If Liberty
Lent not life its soul of light,
Hope its iris of delight,
Truth its prophet's robe to wear,
Love its power to give and bear.

Chorus. In the great morning of the world,
The spirit of God with might unfurl'd
The flag of Freedom over Chaos,
And all its banded anarchs fled,
Like vultures frighted from Imaus,
Before an earthquake's tread—
So from Time's tempestuous dawn
Freedom's splendor burst and shone:—
Thermopylæ and Marathon
Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted,
The springing fire.—The winged glory
On Philippi half-alighted,
Like an eagle on a promontory,
Its unwearied wings could fan
The quenchless ashes of Milan.*
From age to age, from man to man,
It lived; and lit from land to land
Florence, Albion, Switzerland:
Then night fell; and as from night
Re-assuming fiery flight,
From the West swift Freedom came,
Against the course of heaven and doom
A second sun array'd in flame:
To burn, to kindle, to illume,
From far Atlantis its young beams
Chased the shadows and the dreams.
France, with all her sanguine streams,
Hid but quench'd it not; again
Through clouds its shafts of glory ran

* Milan was the centre of the resistance of the Lombard league against the Austrian tyrant. Frederic Barbarossa burnt the city to the ground, but liberty lived in its ashes, and it rose like an exhalation from its ruin. ——See Sismondi's "*Histoire des Republiques Italiennes*," a book which has done much towards awakening the Italians to an imitation of their great ancestors.

From utmost Germany to Spain.
As an eagle fed with morning
Scorns the embattled tempest's warning,
When she seeks her aery hanging
In the mountain cedar's hair,
And her brood expect the clanging
Of her wings through the wild air,
Sick with famine—Freedom so
To what of Greece remaineth now
Returns; her hoary ruins glow
Like orient mountains lost in day;
Beneath the safety of her wings
Her renovated nurselings play,
And in the naked lightnings
Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes.
Let Freedom leave, where'er she flies,
A desert or a Paradise;
Let the beautiful and the brave
Share her glory or a grave.

Semicho. I. With the gifts of gladness
Greece did thy cradle strew.

Semicho. II. With the tears of sadness
Greece did thy shroud bedew.

Semicho. I. With an orphan's affection
She follow'd thy bier through time;

Semicho. II. And at thy resurrection
Re-appeareth, like thou, sublime!

Semicho. I. If Heaven should resume thee,
To Heaven shall her spirit ascend;

Semicho. II. If Hell should entomb thee,
To Hell shall her high hearts bend.

Semicho I. If Annihilation—

Semicho. II. Dust let her glories be;
And a name and a nation
Be forgotten, Freedom, with thee!

Indian. His brow grows darker—breathe not—move not!
He starts—he shudders;—ye that love not,
With your panting loud and fast
Have awaken'd him at last.

MAHMUD *(starting from his sleep.)*

Man the Seraglio-guard! make fast the gate.
What! from a cannonade of three short hours?
'Tis false! that breach towards the Bosphorus
Cannot be practicable yet.—Who stirs?
Stand to the match, that, when the foe prevails,
One spark may mix in reconciling ruin
The conqueror and the conquer'd! Heave the tower
Into the gap—wrench off the roof!

Enter HASSAN.

Ha! what!
The truth of day lightens upon my dream,
And I am Mahmud still.

Has. Your Sublime Highness
Is strangely moved.

Mah. The times do cast strange shadows
On those who watch and who must rule their course,
Lest they, being first in peril as in glory,
Be whelm'd in the fierce ebb:—and these are of them.
Thrice has a gloomy vision haunted me
As thus from sleep into the troubled day;
It shakes me as the tempest shakes the sea,
Leaving no figure upon memory's glass.
Would that—no matter. Thou didst say thou knewest
A Jew, whose spirit is a chronicle
Of strange and secret and forgotten things.
I bade thee summon him:—'tis said his tribe
Dream, and are wise interpreters of dreams.

Has. The Jew of whom I spake is old,—so old

He seems to have outlived a world's decay;
The hoary mountains and the wrinkled ocean
Seem younger still than he;—his hair and beard
Are whiter than the tempest-sifted snow:
His cold pale limbs and pulseless arteries
Are like the fibres of a cloud instinct
With light, and to the soul that quickens them
Are as the atoms of the mountain-drift
To the winter wind:—but from his eye looks forth
A life of unconsumed thought, which pierces
The present, and the past, and the to-come.
Some say that this is he whom the great prophet
Jesus, the son of Joseph, for his mockery
Mock'd with the curse of immortality.
Some feign that he is Enoch; others dream
He was pre-adamite, and has survived
Cycles of generation and of ruin.
The sage, in truth, by dreadful abstinence
And conquering penance of the mutinous flesh,
Deep contemplation, and unwearied study,
In years outstretch'd beyond the date of man,
May have obtain'd to sovereignty and science
Over those strong and secret things and thoughts
Which others fear and know not.

Mah. I would talk
With this old Jew.

Has. Thy will is even now
Made known to him, where he dwells in a sea-cavern
'Mid the Demonesi, less accessible
Than thou or God! He would question him
Must sail alone at sun-set, where the stream
Of ocean sleeps around those foamless isles
When the young moon is westering as now,
And evening airs wander upon the wave;

And when the pines of that bee-pasturing isle,
Green Erebinthus, quench the fiery shadow
Of his gilt prow within the sapphire water;
Then must the lonely helmsman cry aloud,
Ahasuerus! and the caverns round
Will answer, Ahasuerus! If his prayer
Be granted, a faint meteor will arise,
Lighting him over Marmora, and a wind
Will rush out of the sighing pine-forest,
And with the wind a storm of harmony
Unutterably sweet, and pilot him
Through the soft twilight to the Bosphorus:
Thence, at the hour and place and circumstance
Fit for the matter of their conference,
The Jew appears. Few dare, and few who dare,
Win the desired communion—but that shout
Bodes—— [*A shout without.*

Mah. Evil, doubtless; like all human sounds.
Let me converse with spirits.

Has. That shout again!

Mah. This Jew whom thou hast summon'd—

Has. Will be here—

Mah. When the omnipotent hour, to which are yoked
He, I, and all things, shall compel—enough.
Silence those mutineers—that drunken crew
That crowd about the pilot in the storm.
Aye! strike the foremost shorter by a head!
They weary me, and I have need of rest.
Kings are like stars—they rise and set; they have
The worship of the world, but no repose.

[*Exeunt severally.*

*Chorus.** Worlds on worlds are rolling ever

* The popular notions of Christianity are represented in this chorus as true in their relation to the worship they superseded, and that which in all

From creation to decay,
Like the bubbles on a river,
Sparkling, bursting, borne away;
But they are still immortal
Who, through birth's orient portal,
And Death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
Clothe their unceasing flight
In the brief dust and light
Gather'd around their chariots as they go;
New shapes they still may weave,
New Gods, new laws, receive;
Bright or dim are they, as the robes they last
On Death's bare ribs had cast.

A power from the unknown God,
A Promethean conqueror came;

probability they will supersede, without considering their merits in a relation more universal. The first stanza contrasts the immortality of the living and thinking beings which inhabit the planets, and, to use a common and inadequate phrase, clothe themselves in matter, with the transience of the noblest manifestations of the external world.

The concluding verses indicate a progressive state of more or less exalted existence, according to the degree of perfection which every distinct intelligence may have attained. Let it not be supposed that I mean to dogmatize upon a subject concerning which all men are equally ignorant, or that I think the Gordian knot of the origin of evil can be disentangled by that or any similar assertions. The received hypothesis of that Being resembling men in the moral attributes of his nature, having called us out of non-existence, and after inflicting on us the misery of the commission of error, should superadd that of the punishment and the privations consequent upon it, still would remain inexplicable and incredible. That there is a true solution of the riddle, and that in our present state that solution is unattainable by us, are propositions which may be regarded as equally certain; meanwhile, as it is the province of the poet to attach himself to those ideas which exalt and ennoble humanity, let him be permitted to have conjectured the condition of that futurity towards which we are all impelled by an inextinguishable thirst for immortality. Until better arguments can be produced than sophisms which disgrace the cause, this desire itself must remain the strongest and the only presumption that eternity is the inheritance of every thinking being.

Like a triumphal path he trod
The thorns of death and shame.
A mortal shape to him
Was like the vapour dim
Which the orient planet animates with light;
Hell, Sin, and Slavery, came,
Like blood-hounds mild and tame,
Nor prey'd until their lord had taken flight.
The moon of Mahomet
Arose, and it shall set;
While blazon'd as on heaven's immortal noon
The cross leads generations on.

Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep,
From one whose dreams are paradise,
Fly when the fond wretch wakes to weep,
And day peers forth with her blank eyes,
So fleet, so faint, so fair,
The powers of earth and air
Fled from the folding star of Bethlehem:
Apollo, Pan, and Love,
And even Olympian Jove
Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on them.
Our hills, and seas, and streams,
Dispeopled of their dreams,
Their waters turn'd to blood, their dew to tears,
Wail'd for the golden years.

Enter MAHMUD, HASSAN, DAOOD, *and others.*

Mah. More gold? Our ancestors bought gold with victory,
And shall I sell it for defeat?
Daood. The Janizars
Clamour for pay.

Mah. Go! bid them pay themselves
With Christian blood! Are there no Grecian virgins
Whose shrieks and spasms and tears they may enjoy?
No infidel children to impale on spears?
No hoary priests after that patriarch*
Who bent the curse against his country's heart,
Which clove his own at last? Go! bid them kill:
Blood is the seed of gold.

Daood. It has been sown
And yet the harvest to the sickle-men
Is as a grain to each.

Mah. Then take this signet:
Unlock the seventh chamber, in which lie
The treasures of victorious Solyman.
An empire's spoils stored for a day of ruin—
O spirit of my sires! is it not come?
The prey-birds and the wolves are gorged and sleep,
But these, who spread their feast on the red earth,
Hunger for gold, which fills not.—See them fed;
Then lead them to the rivers of fresh death. [*Exit Daood.*
O miserable dawn, after a night
More glorious than the day which it usurp'd!
O faith in God! O power on earth! O word
Of the great Prophet, whose overshadowing wings
Darken'd the thrones and idols of the west,
Now bright!—For thy sake cursed be the hour,

* The Greek Patriarch, after having been compelled to fulminate an anathema against the insurgents, was put to death by the Turks.

Fortunately the Greeks have been taught that they cannot buy security by degradation, and the Turks, though equally cruel, are less cunning than the smooth-faced tyrants of Europe.

As to the anathema, his Holiness might as well have thrown his mitre at Mount Athos for any effect that it produced. The chiefs of the Greeks are almost all men of comprehension and enlightened views of religion and politics.

Even as a father by an evil child,
When the orient moon of Islam roll'd in triumph
From Caucasus to white Ceraunia!
Ruin above, and anarchy below;
Terror without, and treachery within;
The chalice of destruction full, and all
Thirsting to drink; and who among us dares
To dash it from his lips? and where is Hope?

Has. The lamp of our dominion still rides high;
One God is God—Mahomet is his Prophet.
Four hundred thousand Moslems from the limits
Of utmost Asia irresistibly
Throng, like full clouds at the Sirocco's cry,
But not like them to weep their strength in tears;
They have destroying lightning, and their step
Wakes earthquake, to consume and overwhelm,
And reign in ruin. Phrygian Olympus,
Tymolus, and Latmos, and Mycale, roughen
With horrent arms, and lofty ships, even now,
Like vapours anchor'd to a mountain's edge,
Freighted with fire and whirlwind, wait at Scala
The convoy of the ever-veering wind.
Samos is drunk with blood;—the Greek has paid
Brief victory with swift loss and long despair.
The false Moldavian serfs fled fast and far
When the fierce shout of Allah-illa-Allah!
Rose like the war cry of the northern wind,
Which kills the sluggish clouds, and leaves a flock
Of wild swans struggling with the naked storm.
So were the lost Greeks on the Danube's day!
If night is mute, yet the returning sun
Kindles the voices of the morning birds;
Nor at thy bidding less exultingly
Than birds rejoicing in the golden day,
The anarchies of Africa unleash

Their tempest-winged cities of the sea,
To speak in thunder to the rebel world.
Like sulphureous clouds half-shatter'd by the storm
They sweep the pale Ægean, while the Queen
Of Ocean, bound upon her island throne,
Far in the west sits mourning that her sons,
Who frown on Freedom, spare a smile for thee:
Russia still hovers, as an eagle might
Within a cloud, near which a kite and crane
Hang tangled in inextricable fight,
To stoop upon the victor;—for she fears
The name of Freedom, even as she hates thine;
But recreant Austria loves thee as the grave
Loves pestilence, and her slow dogs of war,
Flesh'd with the chace, come up from Italy,
And howl upon their limits; for they see
The panther Freedom fled to her old cover
Amid seas and mountains, and a mightier brood
Crouch around. What anarch wears a crown or mitre,
Or bears the sword, or grasps the key of gold,
Whose friends are not thy friends, whose foes thy foes?
Our arsenals and our armories are full;
Our forts defy assaults; ten thousand cannon
Lie ranged upon the beach, and hour by hour
Their earth-convulsing wheels affright the city;
The galloping of fiery steeds makes pale
The Christian merchant, and the yellow Jew
Hides his hoard deeper in the faithless earth.
Like clouds, and like the shadows of the clouds
Over the hills of Anatolia,
Swift in wide troops the Tartar chivalry
Sweep;—the far-flashing of their starry lances
Reverberates the dying light of day.
We have one God, one King, one Hope, one Law,

But many-headed Insurrection stands
Devided in itself, and soon must fall.

Mah. Proud words, when deeds come short, are seasonable:

Look, Hassan, on yon crescent moon, emblazon'd,
Upon that shatter'd flag of fiery cloud
Which leads the rear of the departing day,
Wan emblem of an empire fading now!
See how it trembles in the blood-red air,
And, like a mighty lamp whose oil is spent,
Shrinks on the horizon's edge, while, from above,
One star with insolent and victorious light
Hovers above its fall, and with keen beams,
Like arrows through a fainting antelope,
Strikes its weak form to death.

Has. Even as that moon
Renews itself—

Mah. Shall we be not renew'd!
Far other bark than ours were needed now
To stem the torrent of descending time:
The spirit that lifts the slave before its lord
Sta'ks through the capitals of armed kings,
And spreads his ensign in the wilderness;
Exults in chains; and, when the rebel falls,
Cries like the blood of Abel from the dust;
And the inheritors of earth, like beasts
When earthquake is unleash'd, with idiot fear
Cower in their kingly dens—as I do now.
What were Defeat, when Victory must appal?
Or Danger, when Security looks pale?
How said the messenger, who, from the fort
Islanded in the Danube, saw the battle
Of Bucharest?—that—

Has. Ibrahim's scimitar

Drew with its gleam swift victory from heaven,
To burn before him in the night of battle—
A light and a destruction.
Mah. Ah! the day
Was ours; but how?—
Has. The light Wallachians,
The Arnaut, Servian, and Albanian, allies,
Fled from the glance of our artillery
Almost before the thunder-stone alit;
One half the Grecian army made a bridge
Of safe and slow retreat with Moslem dead;
The other—
Mah. Speak—tremble not—
Has. Islanded
By victor myriads, form'd in hollow square
With rough and steadfast front, and thrice flung back
The deluge of our foaming cavalry;
Thrice their keen wedge of battle pierced our lines.
Our baffled army trembled like one man
Before a host, and gave them space; but soon,
From the surrounding hills, the batteries blazed,
Yet none approach'd; till, like a field of corn
Under the hook of the swart sickle-m
The bands intrench'd in mounds of Turkish dead
Grew weak and few.—Then said the Pacha, "Slaves,
Render yourselves!—They have abandon'd you—
What hope of refuge, or retreat, or aid?
We grant your lives."—"Grant that which is thine own,'
Cried one, and fell upon his sword and died!
Another—"God, and man, and hope, abandon me;
But I to them and to myself remain
Constant;"—he bow'd his head, and his heart burst.
A third exclaim'd, "There is a refuge, tyrant,

Where thou darest not pursue, and canst not harm,
Shouldst thou pursue; there we shall meet again."
Then held his breath, and, after a brief spasm,
The indignant spirit cast its mortal garment
Among the slain—dead earth upon the earth!
So these survivors, each by different ways,
Some strange, all sudden, none dishonourable,
Met in triumphant death; and when our army,
Closed in, while yet in wonder, awe, and shame,
Held back the base hyenas of the battle
That feed upon the dead and fly the living,
One rose out of the chaos of the slain;
And, if it were a corpse which some dread spirit
Of the old saviours of the land we rule
Had lifted in its anger, wandering by;
Or if there burn'd within the dying man
Unquenchable disdain of death, and faith
Creating what it feign'd; I cannot tell,
But he cried, "Phantoms of the free, we come!
Armies of the Eternal, ye who strike
To dust the citadels of sanguine kings,
And shake the souls throned on their stony hearts,
And thaw their frost-work diadems like dew!—
O ye who float around this clime, and weave
The garment of the glory which it wears,
Whose fame, though earth betray the dust it clasp'd,
Lies sepulchred in monumental thought,
Progenitors of all that yet is great,
Ascribe to your bright senate, O accept,
In your high ministrations, us, your sons—
Us first, and the more glorious yet to come!
And ye, weak conquerors! giants who look pale
When the crush'd worm rebels beneath your tread—
The vultures, and the dogs, your pensioners tame,

Are overgorged; but, like oppressors, still
They crave the relic of destruction's feast.
The exhalations and the thirsty winds
Are sick with blood; the dew is foul with death—
Heaven's light is quench'd in slaughter: Thus where'er
Upon your camps, cities, or towers, or fleets,
The obscene birds the reeking remnants cast
Of these dead limbs upon your streams and mountains,
Upon your fields, your gardens, and your house-tops,
Where'er the winds shall creep, or the clouds fly,
Or the dews fall, or the angry sun look down
With poison'd light—Famine, and Pestilence,
And Panic, shall wage war upon our side!
Nature from all her boundaries is moved
Against ye: Time has found ye light as foam.
The Earth rebels; and Good and Evil stake
Their empire o'er the unborn world of men
On this one cast—but, ere the die be thrown,
The renovated genius of our race,
Proud umpire of the impious game, descends
A seraph-winged Victory, bestriding
The tempest of the Omnipotence of God,
Which sweeps all things to their appointed doom,
And you to Oblivion!"—More he would have said,
But—

Mah. Died—as thou shouldst ere thy lips had painted
Their ruin in the hues of our success.
A rebel's crime, gilt with a rebel's tongue!
Your heart is Greek, Hassan.

Has. It may be so:
A spirit not my own wrench'd me within,
And I have spoken words I fear and hate;
Yet would I die for—

Mah. Live! O live! outlive
Me and this sinking empire:—but the fleet—

Has. Alas!

Mah. The fleet which, like a flock of clouds
Chased by the wind, flies the insurgent banner!
Our winged castles from their merchant ships!
Our myriads before their weak pirate bands!
Our arms before their chains! our years of empire
Before their centuries of servile fear!
Death is awake! Repulsed on the waters,
They own no more the thunder-bearing banner
Of Mahmud; but, like hounds of a base breed,
Gorge from a stranger's hand, and rend their master.

Has. Latmos, and Ampelos, and Phanae, saw
The wreck—

Mah. The caves of the Icarian isles
Hold each to the other in loud mockery,
And with the tongue as of a thousand echoes
First of the sea-convulsing fight—and then—
Thou darest to speak—senseless are the mountains;
Interpret thou their voices.

Has. My presence bore
A part in that day's shame. The Grecian fleet
Bore down at day-break from the North, and hung
As multitudinous on the ocean line
As cranes upon the cloudless Thracian wind.
Our squadron, convoying ten thousand men,
Was stretching towards Nauplia when the battle
Was kindled.—
First through the hail of our artillery
The agile Hydriote barks with press of sail
Dash'd:—ship to ship, cannon to cannon, man
To man, were grappled in the embrace of war,
Inextricable but by death or victory.
The tempest of the raging fight convulsed]

To its crystalline depths that stainless sea,
And shook heaven's roof of golden morning clouds
Poised on a hundred azure mountain-isles.
In the brief trances of the artillery,
One cry from the destroy'd and the destroyer
Rose, and a cloud of desolation wrapt
The unforseen event, till the north wind
Sprung from the sea, lifting the heavy veil
Of battle-smoke—then victory—victory!
For, as we thought, three frigates from Algiers
Bore down from Naxos to our aid, but soon
The abhorr'd cross glimmer'd behind, before,
Among, around, us; and that fatal sign
Dried with its beams the strength of Moslem hearts,
As the sun drinks the dew.—What more? We fled!
Our noonday path over the sanguine foam
Was beacon'd, and the glare struck the sun pale
By our consuming transports: the fierce light
Made all the shadows of our sails blood-red,
And every countenance blank. Some ships lay feeding
The ravening fire even to the water's level:
Some were blown up: some, settling heavily,
Sunk; and the shrieks of our companions died
Upon the wind, that bore us fast and far,
Even after they were dead. Nine thousand perish'd!
We met the vultures legion'd in the air,
Stemming the torrent of the tainted wind:
They, screaming from their cloudy mountain peak,
Stoop'd through the sulphureous battle-smoke, and perch'd
Each on the weltering carcase that we loved,
Like its ill angel or its damned soul.
Riding upon the bosom of the sea,
We saw the dog-fish hastening to their feast.
Joy waked the voiceless people of the sea,

And ravening famine left his ocean-cave
To dwell with war, with us, and with despair.
We met night three hours to the west of Patmos,
And, with night, tempest—

Mah. Cease!

Enter a Messenger.

Mes. Your Sublime Highness,
That Christian hound, the Muscovite ambassador,
Has left the city. If the rebel fleet
Had anchor'd in the port, had victory
Crown'd the Greek legions in the hippodrome,
Panic were tamer.—Obedience and mutiny,
Like giants in contention planet-struck,
Stand gazing on each other.—There is peace
In Stamboul.—

Mah. Is the grave not calmer still?
Its ruins shall be mine.

Has. Fear not the Russian;
The tiger leagues not with the stag at bay
Against the hunter.—Cunning, base, and cruel,
He crouches, watching till the spoil be won,
And must be paid for his reserve in blood.
After the war is fought, yield the sleek Russian
That which thou canst not keep, his deserved portion
Of blood, which shall not flow through streets and fields,
Rivers and seas, like that which we may win,
But stagnate in the veins of Christian slaves!

Enter Second Messenger.

2nd Mes. Nauplia, Tripolizzi, Mothon, Athens,
Navarin, Artas, Mowenbasia,
Corinth, and Thebes, are carried by assault;
And every Islamite who made his dogs

Fat with the flesh of Galilean slaves,
Pass'd at the edge of the sword: the lust of blood,
Which made our warriors drunk, is quench'd in death;
But, like a fiery plague, breaks out anew
In deeds which makes the Christian cause look pale
In its own light. The garrison of Patras
Has store but for ten days, nor is there hope
But from the Briton: at once slave and tyrant,
His wishes still are weaker than his fears;
Or he would sell what faith may yet remain
From the oaths broke in Genoa and in Norway;
And, if you buy him not, your treasury
Is empty even of promises—his own coin.
The freeman of a western poet chief *
Holds Attica with seven thousand rebels,
And has beat back the Pacha of Negropont;
The aged Ali sits in Yanina,
A crownless metaphor of empire;
His name, that shadow of his wither'd might,
Holds our besieging army like a spell
In prey to famine, pest, and mutiny:
He, bastion'd in his citadel, looks forth
Joyless upon the sapphire lake that mirrors
The ruins of the city where he reign'd
Childless and sceptreless. The Greek has reap'd
The costly harvest his own blood matured,
Not the sower, Ali—who has bought a truce
From Ypsilanti with ten camel loads
Of Indian gold.

* A Greek who had been Lord Byron's servant commanded the insurgents in Attica. This Greek, Lord Byron informs me, though a poet and an enthusiastic patriot, gave him rather the idea of a timid and unenterprising person. It appears that circumstances make men what they are, and that we all contain the germ of a degree of degradation or greatness, whose connexion with our character is determined by events.

Enter a Third Messenger.

Mah. What more?

3rd. Mes. The Christian tribes
Of Lebanon and the Syrian wilderness
Are in revolt.—Damascus, Hems, Aleppo,
Tremble;—the Arab menaces Medina;
The Ethiop has intrench'd himself in Sennaar,
And keeps the Egyptian rebel well employ'd;
Who denies homage, claims investiture
As price of tardy aid. Persia demands
The cities on the Tigris, and the Georgians
Refuse their living tribute. Crete and Cyprus,
Like mountain-twins that from each other's veins
Catch the volcano-fire and earthquake-spasm,
Shake in the general fever. Through the city,
Like birds before a storm the santons shriek,
And prophecyings horrible and new
Are heard among the crowd; that sea of men
Sleeps on the wrecks it made, breathless and still.
A Dervise, learn'd in the koran, preaches
That it is written how the sins of Islam
Must raise up a destroyer even now.
The Greeks expect a Saviour from the west,*
Who shall not come, men say, in clouds and glory,
But in the omniprescence of that spirit
In which all live and are. Ominous signs
Are blazon'd broadly on the noon-day sky;
One saw a red cross stamp'd upon the sun;
It has rain'd blood; and monstrous births declare

* It is reported that this Messiah had arrived at a sea-port near Lacedemon in an American brig. The association of names and ideas is irresistibly ludicrous, but the prevalence of such a rumour strongly marks the state of popular enthusiasm in Greece.

The secret wrath of Nature and her Lord.
The army encamp'd upon the Cydaris
Was roused last night by the alarm of battle,
And saw two hosts conflicting in the air,—
The shadows doubtless of the unborn time,
Cast on the mirror of the night. While yet
The fight hung balanced, there arose a storm
Which swept the phantoms from among the stars.
At the third watch the spirit of the plague
Was heard abroad flapping among the tents:
Those who relieved watch found the sentinels dead.
The last news from the camp is, that a thousand
Have sicken'd, and—

Enter Fourth Messenger.

Mah. And thou, pale ghost, dim shadow
Of some untimely rumour, speak!

4th Mes. One comes
Fainting with toil, cover'd with foam and blood;
He stood, he says, upon Clelonites
Promontory, which o'erlooks the isles that groan
Under the Briton's frown, and all their waters
Then trembling in the splendor of the moon,
When, as the wandering clouds unveil'd or hid
Her boundless light, he saw two adverse fleets
Stalk through the night in the horizon's glimmer,
Mingling fierce thunders and sulphureous gleams,
And smoke which strangled every infant wind
That soothed the silver clouds through the deep air.
At length the battle slept, but the Sirocco
Awoke, and drove his flock of thunder-clouds
Over the sea-horizon, blotting out
All objects—save that in the faint moon-glimpse
He saw, or dream'd he saw, the Turkish admiral

And two the loftiest of our ships of war,
With the bright image of that queen of heaven,
Who hid, perhaps, her face for grief, reversed!
And the abhorred cross—

Enter an Attendant.

Atten. Your Sublime Highness,
The Jew, who——
Mah. Could not come more seasonably:
Bid him attend. I'll hear no more! Too long
We gaze on danger through the mist of fear,
And multiply upon our shatter'd hopes
The images of ruin. Come what will!
To-morrow and to-morrow are as lamps
Set in our path to light us to the edge
Through rough and smooth: nor can we suffer aught
Which he inflicts not in whose hand we are. [*Exeunt.*

Semicho. I. Would I were the winged cloud
Of a tempest swift and loud,
I would scorn
The smile of morn,
And the wave where the moon-rise is born!
I would leave
The spirits of eve
A shroud for the corpse of the day to weave
From others' threads than mine!
Bask in the blue noon divine
Who would, not I.

Semicho. II. Whither to fly?

Semicho. I. Where the rocks that gird the Ægean
Echo to the battle pæan
Of the free—
I would flee
A tempestuous herald of victory!

My golden rain
For the Grecian slain
Should mingle in tears with the bloody main;
And my solemn thunder-knell
Should ring to the world the passing-bell
Of tyranny!

Semicho. II. Ah, king! wilt thou chain
The rack and the rain?
Wilt thou fetter the lightning and hurricane?
The storms are free,
But we—

Chorus. O slavery! thou frost of the world's prime,
Killing its flow'rs and leaving its thorns bare;
Thy touch has stamp'd these limbs with crime,
These brows thy branding garland bear;
But the free heart, the impassive soul,
Scorn thy controul!

Semicho. I. Let there be light! said Liberty;
And, like sunrise from the sea,
Athens arose!—Around her born,
Shone, like mountains in the morn,
Glorious states;—and are they now
Ashes, wrecks, oblivion?

Semicho. II. Go
Where Thermæ and Asopus swallow'd
Persia, as the sand does foam,
Deluge upon deluge followed
Discord, Macedon, and Rome:
And, lastly, thou!

Semicho. I. Temples and towers,
Citadels and marts, and they
Who live and die there, have been ours,
And may be thine, and must decay;
But Greece and her foundation are

Built below the tide of war,
Based on the crystalline sea
Of thought and its eternity;
Her citizens' imperial spirits
Rule the present from the past;
On all this world of men inherits
Their seal is set.

Semicho. II. Hear ye the blast,
Whose Orphic thunder thrilling calls
From ruin her Titanian walls?
Whose spirits shakes the sapless bones
Of Slavery? Argos, Corinth, Crete,
Hear, and from their mountain thrones
The dæmons and the nymphs repeat
The harmony.

Semicho. I. I hear! I hear!

Semicho. II. The world's eyeless charioteer,
Destiny, is hurrying by!
What faith is crush'd, what empire bleeds,
Beneath her earthquake-footed steeds?
What eagle-winged victory sits
At her right hand? what shadows flits
Before? what splendor rolls behind?
Ruin and Renovation cry,
Who but we?

Semicho. I. I hear! I hear!
The hiss as of a rushing wind,
The roar as of an ocean foaming,
The thunder as of earthquake coming,
I hear! I hear!
The crash as of an empire falling,
The shrieks as of a people calling
Mercy! Mercy!—How they thrill!
Then a shout of "Kill! kill! kill!"
And then a small still voice, thus—

Semicho. II. For
Revenge and wrong bring forth their kind;
The foul cubs like their parents are;
Their den is in their guilty mind,
And Conscience feeds them with despair.

Semicho. I. In sacred Athens, near the fane
Of Wisdom, Pity's altar stood;
Serve not the unknown God in vain,
But pay that broken shrine again
Love for hate, and tears for blood.

Enter Mahmud *and* Ahasuerus.

Mah. Thou art a man, thou sagest, even as we—
Ahas. No more!
Mah. But raised among thy fellow-men
By thought, as I by power.
Ahas. Thou sayest so.
Mah. Thou art an adept in the difficult lore
Of Greek and Frank philosophy; thou numberest
The flowers, and thou measurest the stars;
Thou severest element from element;
Thy spirit is present in the past, and sees
The birth of this old world through all its cycles
Of desolation and of loveliness;
And when man was not, and how man became
The monarch and the slave of this low sphere,
And all its narrow circles—it is much.
I honour thee, and would be what thou art
Were I not what I am; but the unborn hour,
Cradled in fear and hope, conflicting storms,
Who shall unveil? Nor thou, nor I, nor any
Mighty or wise. I apprehend not
What thou hast taught me, but now I perceive
That thou art no interpreter of dreams;

Thou dost not own that art, device, or God,
Can make the future present—let it come!
Moreover, thou disdainest us and ours:
Thou art as God, whom thou contemplatest.

Ahas. Disdain thee!—not the worm beneath my feet!
The Fathomless has care for meaner things
Than thou canst dream, and has made pride for those
Who would be what they may not, or would seem
That which they are not. Sultan! talk no more
Of thee and me, the future and the past;
But look on that which cannot change—the one
The unborn, and undying. Earth and ocean,
Space, and the isles of life or light that gem
The sapphire floods of interstellar air,
This firmament pavilion'd upon chaos,
With all its cressets of immortal fire,
Whose outwalls, bastion'd impregnably
Against the escape of boldest thoughts, repels them
As Calpe the Atlantic clouds—this whole
Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts, and flowers,
With all the silent or tempestuous workings
By which they have been, are, or cease to be,
Is but a vision;—all that it inherits
Are motes of a sick eye, bubbles, and dreams;
Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor less
The future and the past are idle shadows
Of thought's eternal flight—they have no being;
Nought is but that it feels itself to be.

Mah. What meanest thou? thy words stream like a tempest
Of dazzling mist within my brain—they shake
The earth on which I stand, and hang like night
On Heaven above me. What can they avail?
They cast on all things, surest, brightest, best,
Doubt, insecurity, astonishment.

Ahas. Mistake me not! All is contain'd in each,
Dodona's forest to an acorn's cup,
Is that which has been or will be, to that
Which is—the absent to the present. Thought
Alone, and its quick elements, Will, Passion,
Reason, Imagination, cannot die;
They are what that which they regard appears,
The stuff whence mutability can weave
All that it hath dominion o'er,—worlds, worms,
Empires, and superstitions. What has thought
To do with time, or place, or circumstance?
Wouldst thou behold the future?—ask and have!
Knock and it shall be open'd—look, and lo!
The coming age is shadow'd on the past
As on a glass.

Mah. Wild, wilder thoughts convulse
My spirit—Did not Mahomet the Second
Win Stamboul?

Ahas. Thou wouldst ask that giant spirit
The written fortunes of thy house and faith.
Thou wouldst cite one out of the grave to tell
How what was born in blood must die.

Mah. Thy words
Have power on me! I see—

Ahas. What hearest thou?

Mah. A far whisper——
Terrible silence.

Ahas. What succeeds?

Mah. The sound*
As of the assault of an imperial city,

* For the vision of Mahmud of the taking of Constantinople in 1445, see Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. xii. p. 223. The manner of the invocation of the spirit of Mahomet the Second will

The hiss of inextinguishable fire,
The roar of giant cannon;—the earthquaking
Fall of vast bastions and precipitous towers,
The shock of crags shot from strange enginery,
The clash of wheels, and clang of armed hoofs,
And crash of brazen mail, as of the wreck
Of adamantine mountains—the mad blast
Of trumpets, and the neigh of raging steeds,
And shrieks of women whose thrill jars the blood,
And one sweet laugh, most horrible to hear,
As of a joyous infant waked and playing
With its dead mother's breast; and now more loud
The mingled battle-cry—ha! hear I not
Εν τουτῳ νικη. Allah, illah, Allah!
Ahas. The sulphureous mist is raised—thou seest—
Mah. A chasm,
As of two mountains, in the wall of Stamboul;
And in that ghastly breach the Islamites,
Like giants on the ruins of a world,
Stand in the light of sunrise. In the dust
Glimmers a kingless diadem, and one
Of regal port has cast himself beneath
The steam of war. Another, proudly clad
In golden arms, spurs a Tartarian barb
Into the gap, and with his iron mace

be censured as overdrawn. I could easily have made the Jew a regular conjuror, and the phantom an ordinary ghost. I have preferred to represent the Jew as disclaiming all pretension, or even belief, in supernatural agency, and as tempting Mahmud to that state of mind in which ideas may be supposed to assume the force of sensation, through the confusion of thought with the objects of thought, and the excess of passion animating the creations of imagination.

It is a sort of natural magic, susceptible of being exercised in a degree by any one who should have made himself master of the secret associations of another's thoughts.

Directs the torrent of that tide of men,
And seems—he is—Mahomet.

Ahas. What thou seest
Is but the ghost of thy forgotten dream;
A dream itself, yet less, perhaps, than that
Thou call'st reality. Thou mayst behold
How cities, on which empire sleeps enthroned,
Bow their tower'd crests to mutability.
Poised by the flood, e'en on the height thou holdest,
Thou may'st now learn how the full tide of power
Ebbs to its depths.—Inheritor of glory,
Conceived in darkness, born in blood, and nourish'd
With tears and toil, thou seest the mortal throes
Of that whose birth was but the same. The Past
Now stands before thee like an Incarnation
Of the To-come; yet wouldst thou commune with
That portion of thyself which was ere thou
Didst start for this brief race whose crown is death;
Dissolve with that strong faith and fervent passion
Which call'd it from the uncreated deep,
Yon cloud of war, with its tempestuous phantoms
Of raging death; and draw with mighty will
The imperial shade hither. [*Exit Ahasuerus.*

Mah. Approach!

Phantom. I come
Thence whither thou must go! The grave is fitter
To take the living than give up the dead;
Yet has thy faith prevail'd, and I am here.
The heavy fragments of the power which fell
When I arose, like shapeless crags and clouds,
Hang round my throne on the abyss, and voices
Of strange lament soothe my supreme repose,
Wailing for glory never to return.—
A later empire nods in its decay;

The autumn of a greener faith is come,
And wolfish change, like winter, howls to strip
The foliage in which Fame, the eagle, built
Her aery, while Dominion whelp'd below.
The storm is in its branches, and the frost
Is on its leaves, and the blank deep expects
Oblivion on oblivion, spoil on spoil,
Ruin on ruin: thou art slow, my son;
The anarchs of the world of darkness keep
A throne for thee, round which thine empire lies
Boundless and mute; and for thy subjects thou,
Like us, shall rule the ghosts of murder'd life,
The phantoms of the powers who rule thee now—
Mutinous passions, and conflicting fears,
And hopes that sate themselves on dust and die!
Stript of their mortal strength, as thou of thine.
Islam must fall, but we will reign together,
Over its ruins in the world of death:—
And, if the trunk be dry, yet shall the seed
Unfold itself even in the shape of that
Which gathers birth in its decay. Woe! woe!
To the weak people tangled in the grasp
Of its last spasms.

Mah. Spirit, woe to all!
Woe to the wrong'd and the avenger! Woe
To the destroyer, woe to the destroy'd!
Woe to the dupe, and woe to the deceiver!
Woe to the oppress'd, and woe to the oppressor!
Woe both to those that suffer and inflict!
Those who are born, and those who die! But say,
Imperial shadow of the thing I am,
When, how, by whom, Destruction must accomplish
Her consummation?

Phan. Ask the cold pale Hour
Rich in reversion of impending death,
When he shall fall upon whose ripe grey hairs
Sit care, and sorrow, and infirmity—
The weight which crime, whose wings are plumed with years,
Leaves in his flight from ravaged heart to heart
Over the heads of men, under which burthen
They bow themselves unto the grave; fond wretch!
He leans upon his crutch, and talks of years
To come, and how in hours of youth renew'd
He will renew lost joys, and——

Voice without. Victory! victory!

[*The phantom vanishes.*

Mah. What sound of the importunate earth has broken
My mighty trance?

Voice without. Victory! victory!

Mah. Weak lightning before darkness! poor faint smile
Of dying Islam! Voice which art the response
Of hollow weakness! Do I wake and live?
Were there such things? or may the unquiet brain,
Vex'd by the wise mad talk of the old Jew,
Have shaped itself these shadows of its fear?
It matters not!—for nought we see or dream,
Possess, or lose, or grasp at, can be worth
More than it gives or teaches. Come what may,
The future must become the past, and I
As they were to whom once this present hour,
This gloomy crag of time to which I cling,
Seem'd an Elysian isle of peace and joy
Never to be attain'd.—I must rebuke

This drunkenness of triumph ere it die,
And, dying, bring despair.—Victory!—poor slaves!
[*Exit Mahmud.*

Voice without. Shout in the jubilee of death! The
Greeks
Are as a brood of lions in the net,
Round which the kingly hunters of the earth
Stand smiling. Anarchs, ye whose daily food
Are curses, groans, and gold, the fruit of death,
From Thule to the girdle of the world,
Come, feast! the board of groans with the flesh of men—
The cup is foaming with a nation's blood,
Famine and thirst await:—eat, drink, and die!

Semicho. I. Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream,
Salutes the risen sun, pursues the flying day!
I saw her, ghastly as a tyrant's dream,
Perch on the trembling pyramid of night,
Beneath which earth and all her realms pavilion'd lay
In visions of the dawning undelight.
Who shall impede her flight?
Who rob her of her prey?

Voice without. Victory! victory! Russia's famish'd
eagles
Dare not to prey beneath the crescent's light.
Impale the remnant of the Greeks! despoil!
Violate! make their flesh cheaper than dust!

Semicho. II. Thou voice which art
The herald of the ill in splendor hid!
Thou echo of the hollow heart
Of monarchy, bear me to thine abode
When desolation flashes o'er a world destroy'd.
Oh bear me to those isles of jagged cloud
Which float like mountains on the earthquakes, 'mid

The momentary oceans of the lightning;
Or to some toppling promontory proud
Of solid tempest, whose black pyramid,
Riven, overhangs the founts intensely brightening
Of those dawn-tinted deluges of fire
Before their waves expire,
When heaven and earth are light, and only light
In the thunder-night!

Voice without. Victory! Victory! Austria, Russia, England,
And that tame serpent, that poor shadow, France,
Cry peace, and that means death when monarchs speak!
Ho, there! bring torches, sharpen those red stakes!
These chains are light, fitter for slaves and poisoners
Than Greeks. Kill! plunder! burn! let none remain.

Semicho. I. Alas for Liberty!
If numbers, wealth, or unfulfilling years
Of fate, can quell the free;
Alas for Virtue! when
Torments, or contumely, or the sneers
Of erring-judging men
Can break the heart where it abides.
Alas! if Love, whose smile makes this obscure more splendid,
Can change, with its false times and tides,
Like hope and terror—
Alas for Love!
And Truth, who wanderest lone and unbefriended,
If thou canst veil thy lie-consuming mirror
Before the dazzled eyes of error.
Alas for thee! Image of the above.

Semicho. II. Repulse, with plumes from conquest torn,
Led the ten thousand from the limits of the morn
Through many a hostile Anarchy!

At length they wept aloud and cried, "The sea! the sea!"
Through exile, persecution, and despair,
Rome was, and young Atlantis shall become
The wonder, or the terror, or the tomb,
Of all whose step wakes power lull'd in her savage lair:
But Greece was as a hermit child,
Whose fairest thoughts and limbs were built
To woman's growth by dreams so mild,
She knew not pain nor guilt;
And now, O Victory, blush! and Empire, tremble,
When ye desert the free!
If Greece must be
A wreck, yet shall its fragments re-assemble,
And build themselves again impregnably
In a diviner clime,
To Amphionic music, on some cape sublime,
Which frowns above the idle foam of Time.

Semicho. I. Let the tyrants rule the desert they have made;
Let the free possess the paradise they claim;
Be the fortune of our fierce oppressors weigh'd
With our ruin, our resistance, and our name!

Semicho. II. Our dead shall be the seed of their decay
Our survivors be the shadow of their pride,
Our adversity a dream to pass away—
Their dishonour a remembrance to abide!

Voice without. Victory! Victory! The bought Briton sends
The keys of ocean to the Islamite.
Nor shall the blazon of the cross be veil'd,
And British skill, directing Othman might,
Thunder-strike rebel victory. Oh keep holy
This jubilee of unrevenged blood!
Kill! crush! despoil! Let not a Greek escape!

Semicho. I. Darkness has dawn'd in the East
On the noon of time:
The death-birds descend to their feast
From the hungry clime.
Let Freedom and Peace flee far
To a sunnier strand,
And follow Love's folding star
To the evening land!

Semicho. II. The young moon has fed
Her exhausted horn
With the sunset's fire;
The weak day is dead,
But the night is not born;
And, like loveliness panting with wild desire,
While it trembles with fear and delight,
Hesperus flies from awakening might,
And pants in its beauty and speed with light
Fast-flashing, soft, and bright.
Thou beacon of love! thou lamp of the free!
Guide us far, far away,
To climes where now, veil'd by the ardour of day
Thou art hidden
From waves on which weary Noon
Faints in her summer swoon,
Between kingless continents, sinless as Eden,
Around mountains and islands inviolably
Prankt on the sapphire sea.

Semicho I. Through the sunset of hope,
Like the shapes of a dream,
What Paradise islands of glory gleam
Beneath Heaven's cope
Their shadows more clear float by—
The sound of their oceans, the light of their sky,
The music and fragrance their solitudes breathe,

Burst like morning on dreams, or like Heaven on death,
Through the walls of our prison;
And Greece, which was dead, is arisen!

Cho. The world's great age begins anew,*
The golden years return,
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn:
Heaven smiled, and faiths and empires gleam
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
From waves serener far;
A new Peneus rolls its fountains
Against the morning-star.
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
Young Cyclads, on a sunnier deep;
A loftier Argos cleaves the main,
Fraught with a later prize;
Another Orpheus sings again,
And loves, and weeps, and dies.
A new Ulysses leaves once more
Calypso for his native shore.
Oh write no more the tale of Troy,
If earth Death's scroll must be!
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
Which dawns upon the free:

* The final chorus is indistinct and obscure as the event of the living drama whose arrival it foretells. Prophecies of wars, and rumour of wars, etc. may safely be made by poet or prophet in any age; but to anticipate, however darkly, a period of regeneration and happiness, is a more hazardous exercise of the faculty which bards possess or feign. I will remind the reader, "magno nec proximus intervallo" of Isaiah and Virgil, whose ardent spirits overleaping the actual reign of evil which we endure and bewail, already saw the possible and perhaps approaching state of society in which the "lion shall lie down with the lamb," and "omnis feret omnia tellus." Let these great name be my authority and excuse.

Although a subtle sphinx renew
Riddles of death Thebes never knew,
Another Athens shall arise,
And to remoter time
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
The splendor of its prime;
And leave, if nought so bright may live,
All earth can take or heaven can give.
Saturn and Love their long repose*
Shall burst, more wise and good
Than all who fell, than one who rose,
Than many unwithstood—
Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers
But native tears, and symbol flowers.
Oh cease! must hate and death return?
Cease! must men kill and die?
Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
Of bitter prophecy.
The world is weary of the past—
Oh might it die or rest at last!

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* Saturn and Love were among the deities of a real or imaginary state of innocence and happiness. All those who fell, or the Gods of Greece, Asia, and Egypt, and the many unsubdued, or the monstrous objects of the idolatry of China, India, the Antarctic islands, and the native tribes of America, certainly have reigned over the understandings of men in conjunction or in succession, during periods in which all we know of evil has been in a state of portentous, and, until the revival of learning and the arts, perpetually increasing activity. The Grecian Gods seem indeed to have been personally more innocent, although it cannot be said that, as far as temperance and chastity are concerned, they gave very edifying examples. The horrors of the Mexican, the Peruvian, and the Indian, superstitions are well known.

THE END.

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